

Samuel E. Thorne

With Best Wishes of

George Herbert Palmer

Harvard University

January 20

1928



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

THE ENGLISH WORKS OF
GEORGE HERBERT

IN SIX VOLUMES

I



THE ENGLISH WORKS OF
George Herbert

EDITED BY GEORGE HERBERT PALMER

VOLUME ONE

ESSAYS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

MDCCCCV

COPYRIGHT 1905 BY GEORGE HERBERT PALMER

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

• •
•

THIS LARGE-PAPER EDITION IN SIX VOLUMES

IS LIMITED TO 150 COPIES

PRINTED FROM TYPE AT THE RIVERSIDE PRESS

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U.S.A.

NO. 130

TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOLUME I

CHRONOLOGY	PAGE	1
------------	------	---

INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS

I. THE LIFE	15
II. THE MAN	47
III. THE RELIGIOUS POETRY	85
IV. THE STYLE	121
V. THE TEXT AND ORDER	169

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME I

WHITE'S DRAWING	FRONTISPIECE
WHITE'S ENGRAVING IN THE TEMPLE, 1674	PAGE 14
STURT'S ENGRAVING IN THE TEMPLE, 1709	46
PAGE OF THE BODLEIAN MANUSCRIPT	84
ENGLISH POEM FROM THE WILLIAMS MANUSCRIPT	120
LATIN POEMS FROM THE WILLIAMS MANUSCRIPT	168

PREFACE

PREFACE

THERE are few to whom this book will seem worth while. It embodies long labor, spent on a minor poet, and will probably never be read entire by any one. But that is a reason for its existence. Lavishness is in its aim. The book is a box of spikenard, poured in unappeasable love over one who has attended my life. When I lay in my cradle, a devotee of Herbert gave me the old poet's name, so securing him for my godfather. Before I could well read, I knew a large part of his verse, — not its meaning, but (what was more important then) its large diction, flexible rhythms, and stimulating mysteries. As I grew, the wisdom hidden in the strange lines was gradually disclosed, and in daily experience,

*His words did finde me out, and parallels bring,
And in another make me understood.*

For fifty years, with suitable fluctuations of intimacy, he has been my bounteous comrade. And while his elaborate ecclesiasticism has often repelled me, a Puritan, and his special type of self-centred piety has not attracted, he has rendered me profoundly grateful for what he has shown of himself, — the struggling soul, the high-bred gen-

tleman, the sagacious observer, the master of language, the persistent artist. I could not die in peace, if I did not raise a costly monument to his beneficent memory.

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that an elaborate edition of a subordinate poet is excusable only on grounds of personal devotion. There are public reasons too. The tendencies of an age appear more distinctly in its writers of inferior rank than in those of commanding genius. These latter tell of past and future as well as of the years in which they live. They are for all time. But on the sensitive, responsive souls, of less creative power, current ideals record themselves with clearness. Whoever, then, values literary history will be glad to seek out the gentle and incomplete poet, be willing for a while to dwell dispassionately in his narrow surroundings, without praise or blame will examine his numbered thoughts, and never forget that even restricted times and poets work out necessary elements of human nature and appropriately further its growth. A small writer so studied becomes large. So would I study Herbert, laying chief stress on his psychological, social, and literary significance, and marking his connection with the world-movements of his age.

That there is room for such a study, a brief sketch of the present condition of Herbert-scholarship will show. His poetry has had two periods of popularity and a century of neglect. He has been

revived after an interval, and even now has not quite come to his own. Between his death, in 1633, and 1709 thirteen editions were published. He so immediately hit the taste of his day that in the first year a second edition of his book was called for, and in 1670 Walton estimated that twenty thousand copies had been sold. But between 1709 and 1799 not a single edition appeared. Herbert was despised, and only here and there a Cowper admired him. At the opening of the nineteenth century Coleridge called attention to him again; and in 1835 Pickering began to publish editions of his works more complete than had ever before appeared. The period of Romanticism was at hand, the Oxford ecclesiastical movement, and the interest in our early literature, — all influences favorable to Herbert. In 1874 Dr. Grosart brought to light the important Williams Manuscript and edited his two elaborate editions. Unhappily he left a worse text than he found; and when he attempted a reprint of Ferrar's first edition, he seriously damaged its worth by careless proof-reading. In 1899 Dr. Gibson was more successful in reproducing the original text and in adding the readings of the Williams Manuscript. During the last quarter century a new edition of Herbert has appeared almost every other year.

Yet in this period of Herbert's second popularity he is more bought than read. Half a dozen of his poems are famous; but the remainder, many of

them equally fitted for household words, nobody looks at. They lie hidden beneath ancestral encumbrances which editors have not had the courage to clear away. A fairly accurate text has been established, but the arrangement of the book preserves its original chaos. No attempt has ever been made to set the poems in intelligible order. The many religious, artistic, and personal problems which they involve remain unexamined. Probably no other poet except Donne stands so much in need of elucidation. Yet only half a dozen editions of Herbert have any notes, and these are generally slight and copied from book to book. Perhaps editors have feared to come to close quarters with him, knowing how much there is to do. How loosely he is published appears in the fact that his book is still without an index of first lines. Present means of access to him are, in short, elementary.

It is these defects, then, which I would meet. Let there be applied to Herbert those comparative and encyclopædic methods which have already been accorded to Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Tennyson, and Browning. No one man can accomplish so much. But a beginning may be made, and to it I seem to be called by a long and enriching intimacy. This book will not supersede the many handy editions which are issued for devotional purposes. They will still serve their hallowed ends. My aim is different. I am attempting a kind of critical diction-

ary of Herbert, in which his meaning may be systematically fixed with reference to the text itself, to the facts of the author's life, and to the literary conditions under which his poetry arose.

My plan is this: After a chronological survey of his age, such matters as are essential to a general understanding of his poetry are discussed in a series of Introductory Essays. These deal with the events of his life, the traits of his character, the type of his religious verse, the technique of his expression, and our means of knowing what he wrote. The most important of them for an understanding of my book — and the one which should be read by whoever can read but one — is the last, on the text and order. It there appears that no exact chronological arrangement of the poems is possible. By using, however, certain broad indications of time, and combining them with the subject-matter, I am able to form twelve significant Groups. To the Groups brief Prefaces are prefixed, giving the reasons for putting together these particular poems, and indicating the features of Herbert's life which they involve. By this association of Essays, Prefaces, and Groups of poems I hope my poet may find that opportunity for self-portraiture which a prose writer usually obtains in a Life and Letters.

Desiring the book to be a Variorum Edition, I have gathered into it whatever of importance has been proposed by previous commentators, and

have myself steadily turned toward fulness of comment ; but a simple classification renders the voluminous notes easy of reference. All are not intended for any one person. They are of five sorts: explanations of words, of phrases, of connections of thought, similar passages in Herbert, and similar passages in his contemporaries. Some notes are for beginners, who want to know what this antique and cloudy poet is talking about. For them I try to *copie fair what time hath blurr'd*, and offer a paraphrase of every sentence at which a fairly intelligent person might hesitate. Others are for those who already know Herbert so well that they would like to apply a microscope and develop his minuter beauties. For them I treat of subtler matters, and especially for them are intended the cross-references, showing Herbert's curious tenacity of thought and even of phrase. By these he is made to comment on himself, and out of his own mouth to explain his peculiar locutions. Wherever, too, in his prose writings similar thoughts or words occur, I quote the passages; as I also bring out of Ferrar, Oley, or Walton whatever illustration those early eulogists afford.

To trace the external sources from which Herbert derived material is uncertain business. I have ventured on it sparingly. Wide as his learning is, he has fully assimilated it, and rarely quotes or directly mentions other writers. Yet his incessant allusion to the Bible is so evident that I have felt

obliged to refer to such Biblical phrases as he probably had in mind. And rarely as he mentions contemporary poets, I have thought it instructive to cite parallel passages from those who immediately preceded him; but I offer no opinion about the nature or degree of his debts. Donne, however, may fairly be called his master, and to Donne his obligations are of a more palpable sort. Among those who came after him, Henry Vaughan was in so special a sense his follower, besides being himself a delicate and highly individual poet, that I have felt justified in calling attention to his longer imitations. To trace his smaller ones would be tedious, as Vaughan seldom writes a dozen lines without remembrance of Herbert.

In the photographic illustrations I attempt to exhibit whatever portions of Herbert's visible world have survived the centuries. Here are the homes of his childhood, youth, and maturity; here the many churches with which in divers ways his life was connected; here are his portraits, the original drawing and the two early engravings from it; here the handwriting of his ordination subscriptions, preserved in the Record Office at Salisbury; and here that hand may again be traced in pages of the manuscripts of his poems. While these things can afford no such pleasure to one who finds them in a book as to him who has gathered them by pilgrimage to every spot where Herbert's feet have stood, I believe they will all

be looked at with interest; and some, especially the handwriting and White's drawing, will throw fresh light on problems of the verse.

My first plan was to publish only the poems, and I still desire to concentrate attention on them, paying little regard to anything else. *THE COUNTRY PARSON*, however, itself almost a poem, has such intimate relations with *THE TEMPLE* that each suffers in the other's absence. The letters, too, can hardly be omitted. Better than anything else they show Herbert in his every-day dress, especially in the years before he became a priest. The beauty of the translation of Cornaro, and the theologic interest of the notes on Valdesso, justify their inclusion. When these are added, we have the complete English works of Herbert; for nothing is his in the *JACULA PRUDENTUM* except the collection, and at least two thirds of that is the work of later editors.

I cannot bring myself to include the Latin verse. It would double the size of my book and halve its quality. Unless Latin verse is excellent it is worthless; and surely no one will call Herbert's excellent. The reasons for its inferiority are obscure. With his lifelong practice in Latin, with his love of refinement, condensation, and verbal elegance, one might expect from Herbert as exquisite Latin poetry as Milton wrote. But unless my judgment is at fault, it is ordinary and conventional. He would be a hardy adventurer who should read five successive pages of it. But Herbert wrote a

hundred pages, and added more in Greek. The Latin orations, also, and the Latin letters are too stilted and official for ordinary mortals. When Herbert touches Latin, he leaves simplicity behind. I omit these pieces, then, not merely because they are uninteresting, but because they reveal so little of the man.

While I have derived much from those who have previously written about Herbert, especially from Coleridge, Willmott, Macdonald, Palgrave, Grosart, and Beeching, my most stimulating aid has come by word of mouth. In the ten years during which my book has been growing, friends have made generous gifts of suggestion and criticism. Especially large are my obligations to Mr. Lewis Kennedy Morse of Boston, the best Herbert scholar of my acquaintance and my perpetually watchful helper; to Miss Lucy Sprague of the University of California, who, in pursuance of studies in Herbert, subjected the whole body of my notes to a searching revision; to my brother, Rev. Frederic Palmer of Andover, who so freely placed at my disposal his minute knowledge of ecclesiastical conditions under the Stuarts that parts of my discussion, especially the seventh section of the second Essay, may be said to have been supplied by him; to Professor A. V. G. Allen of the Episcopal Theological School, Cambridge, for similar guidance in the broader fields of church history; to Professor J. B. Fletcher of Columbia Univer-

sity, for help in comparative literature; to Professor Charles Eliot Norton for many valued consultations, besides the loan and gift of precious books; and to the late Dr. Horace E. Scudder of Cambridge, for granting me during long years a share in that sober judgment of literary products and that imaginative guidance of inexperienced writers on which he was ever wont to expend himself.

All this aid, however, is insignificant compared with that furnished by my wife, Alice Freeman Palmer. In reality the book is only half mine. It was begun at her instance, enriched by her daily contributions, sustained through difficulties by her resourceful courage, the tedium of its mechanical part lightened by her ever ready fingers. When she was dying she asked for its speedy publication. Alas, that she should not see what through more than half her married life she eagerly foresaw, and that the book must miss that ultimate perfection which her full coöperation might have secured!

HARVARD UNIVERSITY,
March 19, 1905.

CHRONOLOGY

CHRONOLOGY

The dates of this list are stated according to the New Style of reckoning. Those printed in small capitals refer to Herbert and his immediate circle; those in italics, to political and public events; those in ordinary type, to literature.

- 1580. Montaigne's *Essais*, Bks. I, II.
- 1581. Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*.
- 1583. EDWARD HERBERT, GEORGE HERBERT'S
ELDEST BROTHER, BORN.
- 1584. Giordano Bruno's *Della Causa, and Dell'
Infinito Universo*.
- 1585. Pierre de Ronsard dies.
- 1586. Sir Philip Sidney killed at Zütphen.
- 1588. G. Fletcher, Hobbes, and Wither born.
Defeat of Spanish Armada.
- 1589. *Henry IV King of France.*
- 1590. Sidney's *Arcadia*. Spenser's *Faerie Queene*,
Bks. I-III.
- 1591. Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella*. Shake-
speare's *Plays* begun. Herrick born.
- 1592. Quarles born. Montaigne dies.
- 1593. APRIL 3. GEORGE HERBERT BORN AT
MONTGOMERY CASTLE, NORTH WALES.

- Ferrar and Walton born. Marlowe dies.
1594. Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, Bks. I-IV.
1595. Sidney's Apology for Poetry. Spenser's Colin Clout. Tasso dies.
1596. EDWARD HERBERT MATRICULATES AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD.
Spenser's Faerie Queene, Bks. IV-VI.
1597. RICHARD HERBERT, GEORGE HERBERT'S FATHER, DIES.
Bishop Hall's Satires. Bacon's Essays.
1598. LADY HERBERT MOVES TO OXFORD.
Chapman's Iliad. Jonson's Every Man in His Humor.
Edict of Nantes. Philip II of Spain dies.
1599. Globe Theatre built. Davies' Nosce Teipsum. Spenser dies.
1600. MONUMENT TO RICHARD HERBERT ERECTED IN MONTGOMERY CHURCH.
G. Bruno and Hooker die.
1601. John Donne marries Anne More.
1602. *Bodleian Library founded.*
1603. LADY HERBERT MOVES TO LONDON.
Elizabeth dies, James I succeeding. Plague in Oxford.
1604. *Hampton Court Conference.*

Melville's Anti-Tami-Cami-Categoria.

1605. HERBERT ENTERS WESTMINSTER SCHOOL.

Bacon's Advancement of Learning. Sir
T. Browne born.

Gunpowder Plot.

1606. Waller and Corneille born. Lyly dies.

1607. *Jamestown, Virginia, founded.*

1608. EDWARD HERBERT GOES ABROAD.

Beaumont and Fletcher's Philaster. Mil-
ton born.

1609. LADY HERBERT MARRIES SIR JOHN DAN-
VERS. GEORGE HERBERT APPOINTED KING'S
SCHOLAR AT TRINITY COLLEGE, CAM-
BRIDGE, MAY 5; AND MATRICULATES DE-
CEMBER 18.

Shakespeare's Sonnets published.

Robinson's Puritans settle at Leyden.

1610. GEORGE HERBERT'S SONNETS TO HIS MO-
THER.

John Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess. Giles
Fletcher's Christ's Victorie.

*The Great Contract. Henry IV of France
assassinated, Louis XIII succeeding.*

1611. Translation of the Bible.

1612. HERBERT TAKES B. A. DEGREE. HIS TWO
LATIN POEMS ON THE DEATH OF PRINCE

HENRY PRINTED IN CAMBRIDGE COLLECTION OF ELEGIES.

Webster's White Devil. Samuel Butler born.

Death of Prince Henry.

1613. Drayton's Polyolbion. Browne's Britannia's Pastorals. Crashaw and Jeremy Taylor born.

The Princess Elizabeth marries Frederic V, Elector Palatine. Death of Sir T. Overbury.

1614. HERBERT APPOINTED MINOR FELLOW.

Raleigh's History of the World. Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist, born.

1615. Wither's Shepherd's Hunting. Baxter and Denham born.

1616. HERBERT TAKES HIS M. A. DEGREE, AND IS APPOINTED MAJOR FELLOW.

Shakespeare and Cervantes die.

Condemnation of Somerset. Rise of Buckingham.

1617. HERBERT APPOINTED SUBLECTOR QUARTAE CLASSIS AT TRINITY.

Cudworth born. Donne's wife dies.

1618. HERBERT APPOINTED PRAELECTOR IN RHETORIC.

Cowley and Lovelace born.

Execution of Raleigh. Beginning of Thirty Years' War.

1619. HERBERT APPOINTED PUBLIC ORATOR AT CAMBRIDGE. HIS LATIN POEM ON DEATH OF QUEEN ANNE PRINTED IN CAMBRIDGE COLLECTION OF ELEGIES. EDWARD HERBERT APPOINTED AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE. Visit of Ben Jonson to Drummond of Hawthornden. Campion and Daniel die.

1620. HERBERT WRITES THANKING THE KING FOR HIS BASILIKON DORON, AND BACON FOR HIS INSTAURATIO MAGNA.

Marvell born.

Plymouth in New England settled.

1621. Donne becomes Dean of St. Paul's. Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy.

Fall of Bacon.

1622. Vaughan and Molière born. Andrew Melville dies.

1623. HERBERT RECEIVES FROM THE KING THE SINECURE LAY RECTORSHIP OF WHITFORD. ORATIO QUA AUSPICATISSIMI SERENISSIMUM PRINCIPIS CAROLI REDITUM EX HISPANIIS CELEBRAVIT GEORGIUS HERBERT. ORATIO DOMINI GEORGII HERBERT HABITA CORAM

DOMINIS LEGATIS CUM MAGISTRO IN ARTIB.
TITULIS INSIGNIRENTUR. HIS BROTHER
HENRY APPOINTED MASTER OF THE REVELS
AT COURT AND KNIGHTED.

First folio of Shakespeare published.
Pascal born.

Duke of Richmond dies.

1624. EDWARD HERBERT RECALLED FROM PARIS,
AND PUBLISHES HIS DE VERITATE.

George Fox born. Duke of Lenox dies.

1625. BACON DEDICATES TO HERBERT CERTAIN
PSALMS.

Milton matriculates at Christ's College,
Cambridge. Grotius' De Jure Belli et
Pacis. John Fletcher and Lodge die.

*Plague in London. King James dies,
Charles I succeeding. Marquis of Hamilton
dies.*

1626. HERBERT APPOINTED PREBENDARY OF
LEIGHTON ECCLESIA IN DIOCESE OF LIN-
COLN.

Ferrar settles at Little Gidding. Bishop
Andrewes, Bacon, and Sir J. Davies die.

War declared against France.

1627. HERBERT'S MOTHER DIES. HE RESIGNS THE
ORATORSHIP. HIS PARENTALIA (LATIN

AND GREEK POEMS) APPENDED TO DONNE'S
SERMON IN COMMEMORATION OF LADY
DANVERS.

Bossuet born.

1628. HERBERT, THREATENED WITH CONSUMPTION, VISITS HIS BROTHER HENRY AT WOODFORD, ESSEX. SIR JOHN DANVERS MARRIES ELIZABETH DAUNTSEY.

Bunyan born.

Petition of Right. Wentworth President of Council of North. Laud Bishop of London. Assassination of Buckingham.

1629. HERBERT LIVING AT DAUNTSEY, WILTS, WITH THE EARL OF DANBY, SIR JOHN DANVERS' ELDEST BROTHER. MARRIES JANE DANVERS, MARCH 5. EDWARD HERBERT MADE BARON OF CHERBURY.

Parliament dissolved for eleven years.

1630. HERBERT INSTITUTED AT BEMERTON, APRIL 26. ORDAINED PRIEST, SEPTEMBER 19. WILLIAM, EARL OF PEMBROKE, DIES, APRIL 10, HIS BROTHER PHILIP SUCCEEDING.

Settlement of Boston, Massachusetts.

1631. Dryden born. Donne and Drayton die.

1632. HERBERT SENDS NOTES ON VALDESSO TO

FERRAR. HIS NIECE, DOROTHY VAUGHAN,
DIES AT BEMERTON.

Locke and Spinoza born.

*Battle of Lützen and death of Gustavus
Adolphus.*

1633. HERBERT BURIED AT BEMERTON, MARCH 3.
HIS WILL PROVED MARCH 12. THE TEMPLE
PUBLISHED AT CAMBRIDGE, SOME UNDATED
COPIES AND TWO EDITIONS. (THE OTHER
EDITIONS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
ARE 1634, 1635, 1638, 1641 WITH SYNA-
GOGUE AND TABLE, 1656, 1660, 1667, 1674
WITH PORTRAIT AND LIFE, 1679, 1695.)

*Laud Archbishop of Canterbury. Went-
worth Lord Deputy of Ireland. Galileo ab-
jures Copernican system.*

1634. A TREATISE OF TEMPERANCE AND SOBRI-
ETY TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF
LUD. CORNARUS BY HERBERT, AND PUB-
LISHED WITH A TRANSLATION OF LEONARD
LESSIUS' LATIN HYGIASTICON, AND A TRANS-
LATION OF AN ANONYMOUS ITALIAN DIS-
COURSE ON TEMPERANCE.

Crashaw's first publication, *Epigrammata
Sacra*. Milton's *Comus* acted. Chapman
and Marston die.

1637. HERBERT'S WIDOW MARRIES SIR ROBERT COOK OF HIGHNAM COURT, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.
Nicholas Ferrar dies.
1638. FERRAR'S TRANSLATION OF THE DIVINE CONSIDERATIONS OF JOHN VALDESSO, CONTAINING A LETTER AND NOTES BY HERBERT.
1640. OUTLANDISH PROVERBS SELECTED BY MR. G. H.
1645. HIGHNAM COURT BURNED. R. WHITE, ENGRAVER OF HERBERT'S PORTRAIT, BORN.
1652. HERBERT'S REMAINS, CONTAINING A LIFE BY B. OLEY, A PRIEST TO THE TEMPLE, JACULA PRUDENTUM (WITH TITLE-PAGE DATED 1651), PRAYER BEFORE AND AFTER SERMON, THE LETTER TO FERRAR ON VALDESSO, TWO LATIN POEMS TO BACON AND ONE TO DONNE, WITH AN ADDITION OF APOTHEGMES BY SEVERALL AUTHOURS.
1655. SIR JOHN DANVERS DIES.
1662. GEORGII HERBERTI, ANGLI MUSAE RESPONSORIAE AD ANDREAE MELVINI, SCOTI, ANTI-TAMI-CAMI-CATEGORIAM, APPENDED TO ECCLESIASTES SOLOMONIS, PER JA. DUPORT.

1665. LADY COOK DIES AT HIGHNAM.
1670. THE LIFE OF MR. GEORGE HERBERT WRITTEN BY IZAAK WALTON. TO WHICH ARE ADDED SOME LETTERS WRITTEN BY MR. GEORGE HERBERT AT HIS BEING IN CAMBRIDGE, WITH OTHERS TO HIS MOTHER, THE LADY MAGDALEN HERBERT. (SIX NOT BEFORE PRINTED. THE LIFE OF HERBERT WAS ADDED TO THE OTHER LIVES WRITTEN BY WALTON, AND ALL WERE PUBLISHED TOGETHER IN THE SAME YEAR.)
1671. A PRIEST TO THE TEMPLE. THE SECOND EDITION, WITH A NEW PREFACE BY B. OLEY. (THE FIRST SEPARATE EDITION.)
1764. AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF EDWARD, LORD HERBERT OF CHERBURY, FIRST PUBLISHED BY HORACE WALPOLE, STRAWBERRY HILL PRESS. (BEST CRITICAL EDITION, EDITED BY SIDNEY LEE, 1886.)
1818. EPISTOLARY CURIOSITIES, EDITED BY REBECCA WARNER, CONTAINING FOUR ADDITIONAL LETTERS.
1835. PICKERING'S EDITION OF HERBERT'S WORKS, CONTAINING COLERIDGE'S ANNOTATIONS, ADDING SEVENTEEN LATIN LETTERS FROM THE ORATOR'S BOOK AT CAMBRIDGE,

SEVERAL LATIN POEMS, AND AN ENGLISH POEM SUPPOSED TO BE BY HIM.

1874. REV. A. B. GROSART'S EDITION OF HERBERT'S WORKS, ADDING SIX ENGLISH POEMS AND TWO GROUPS OF LATIN POEMS (ENTITLED PASSIO DISCERPTA AND LUCUS) FROM THE MS. IN THE WILLIAMS LIBRARY, ALSO SEVEN PSALMS POSSIBLY BY HERBERT.
1893. LIFE OF GEORGE HERBERT, BY J. J. DANIELL, PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE. (REVISED EDITION IN 1898.)



*The Effigies of M^r. George Herbert:
Author of those Sacred Poems called
The Temple.*

I

OUTLINES OF THE LIFE

OUTLINES OF THE LIFE

I

THE brief period of Herbert's life forms a turning-point in English history. Whatever occurred before it seems ancient; whatever after, modern. Within its compass of forty years are included nearly a quarter of Elizabeth's reign, the whole of that of James, and a third of that of Charles. While the third centennial of Herbert's birth was passed twelve years ago, he being born but a century after Columbus set sail and but five years after the Armada, he lived through half of the Thirty Years' War. He saw the beginning of the religious colonization of America, and almost its end. During his life the institutions of England and the temper of its people underwent radical change; a novel religious spirit appeared, soon showing revolutionary power; from healthy objectivity men's minds turned to introspection, personal interests taking the place of national. At his birth English literature was in its infancy; at his death it had become one of the great literatures of the world and was already in decline. Enumerating all the notable English writers who died before Herbert was born, we arrive at little more than a

dozen. There is far-away Chaucer and his immediate group, Wiclif, Gower, Lydgate, and the author of *Piers Plowman*. In another century come Malory, Skelton, and the Balladists. Just preceding Herbert's birth appear Tyndale, Coverdale, More, Foxe, Ascham, Wyatt, Surrey, Gascoigne, Sidney. All the rest of our vast company of writers were either the contemporaries or successors of Herbert. In his childhood the plays of Lyly, Greene, Peele, and Nashe were still being printed, the first books of Spenser's *Faerie Queene* had just appeared, those of Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity* being issued in Herbert's second year. Shakespeare was busy with his poems and his early plays. Neither Marlowe's *Edward II*, nor Sidney's *Apology for Poetry*, nor Chapman's *Iliad*, nor Bacon's *Essays* were yet printed. But when Herbert died, the period of constructive development in the drama, the lyric, the sonnet, was over. Locke and Dryden were born; Davenant, Randolph, and Shirley were in vogue upon the stage; Cowley's and Crashaw's first works were being published. Most of the great Elizabethans were in their graves; where Donne, the leader of the new poetry, had recently joined them. Milton's *Hymn On the Nativity*, his *Allegro* and *Penseroso*, were written, and in the following year his *Comus* was acted. A period of equal length more markedly transitional cannot be found in English history.

Living at a time when our literature reached

such sudden and briefly sustained eminence, Herbert enjoyed the society of a wonderful company of Englishmen. An anonymous reviewer has gathered his associates into a few picturesque groups: "Herbert was a resident of London before the glorious names which have made the reign of Elizabeth bright to all generations had become names only, — when Camden, Selden, Raleigh, Sackville, Drayton, most of our great dramatists, and Shakespeare himself walked our streets. He was at Cambridge when Herrick, Giles Fletcher, Fanshawe, Jeremy Taylor, Milton, Cromwell, were fellow students; and was a visitant at a court to whose pleasures Inigo Jones, Marston, Middleton, and Ben Jonson ministered, — a court where Andrewes, Wotton, Donne, Coke, Bacon, held high place. All these he must have looked upon, and with many he must have exchanged formal courtesies and quaint compliments."

His life divides itself most naturally into four unequal periods, those of Education, Hesitation, Crisis, and Consecration: the first carrying him up to his twenty-sixth year and to his application for the Cambridge Oratorship, about 1619; the second extending through the next eight years, to the death of his friends, his resignation of the Oratorship, and his plans for rebuilding Leighton Church in 1626-27; the third covering the time of illness and uncertainty till his taking orders in 1630; and the fourth, his three years as a priest at Bemerton. To each

of these periods I devote a section of this essay, and add a final section on his early biographer, Walton.

II

GEORGE HERBERT (the name was pronounced and often written Harbert) was born April 3, 1593, at Montgomery in North Wales. There his father owned two estates, Montgomery Castle and Black Hall. In which of them the poet was born is uncertain. Since Montgomery Church has no record of his baptism, he may have been born, like his brother Edward, at Eyton in Shropshire, his mother's maiden home, or he may have been baptized at the Castle itself. Montgomery Castle belongs to that line of fortresses which extends along the eastern boundary of Wales, "The Marches," built to hold the rebellious Welsh in awe. It lies on the borders of Montgomeryshire and Shropshire, in an agricultural region, hilly rather than mountainous, the town small and with woodland in its vicinity; "a pleasant romancy place" in Anthony Wood's time, and in ours also. The eminence on which the castle stood was known as Primrose Hill, and is commemorated in Donne's lines entitled *The Primrose*. In 1644 Edward Herbert surrendered the Castle to the Parliament, who destroyed it in 1649. Little more than the outline of its wall is now visible.

The Herbert family is one of the oldest, stateliest,

and most extended in England. Three earldoms — Pembroke, Carnarvon, and Powis — still remain in the family. It begins with a chamberlain of William the Conqueror, establishing itself both in England and in Wales. At the thirteenth generation, in the middle of the fifteenth century, it divides: the elder brother, William, then made first Earl of Pembroke, becoming the ancestor five generations later of the famous brothers, William and Philip, successively Earls of Pembroke in George Herbert's time; while through his younger son, Richard, the Earl became the ancestor also in the fifth generation of George Herbert's father, Richard, the lord of Montgomery. These two parts of the family always kept in close relation with each other; the English as the older, richer, more intimately connected with the Court and with letters, being regarded by the Welsh branch as their strong ally and patron.

The Herberts of Montgomery were more noted for courage than for intellect. They were a race of soldiers, tall, handsome, black-haired, who lived roughly, quarrelled easily, were sensitive in matters of honor, and with a strong hand dealt out justice over their turbulent domains. But they were trained as gentlemen, too. Of George Herbert's father his son Edward records that "his learning was not vulgar, as understanding well the Latin tongue and being well versed in history." Yet the soldierly blood was in them all. George

was the fifth among ten children, seven sons and three daughters, "Job's number and Job's distribution." His brothers, Richard and William, died as officers in the Flemish wars. Thomas commanded a vessel in the navy. George himself laments that feeble health compelled him to the scholar's life,

*Whereas my birth and spirit rather took
The way that takes the town;*

that is, the martial career. The eldest brother, Edward, created in 1629 Baron Herbert of Cherbury, — from his manor, four miles from Montgomery, — was at once soldier, statesman, historian, poet, and religious philosopher. A younger brother, Charles, who died while at the University, also wrote verses.

Perhaps the literary and artistic tendencies which thus appear a little incongruously in this contentious stock were contributed by the mother. Magdalen Newport was the daughter of one of the largest landed proprietors of Shropshire. She was granddaughter of Sir Thomas Bromley, Chief Justice under Henry VIII and an executor of the King's Will. Even in that age, prolific in powerful women, she was notable; for she combined in herself beauty, piety, intellect, passion, artistic and literary tastes, business ability, social charm. Walton gives a winning account of "her great and harmless wit, her chearful gravity and her obliging

behaviour." An accomplished musician, she trained all her children in music. One of her intimates who deeply affected her son was Dr. Donne, the poet, and the eloquent Dean of St. Paul's. At a critical period in his affairs she assisted him and his large family. He wrote to her one of his Verse-Letters, his lines *The Autumnal*, and his sonnet on St. Mary Magdalen. Over her he preached one of the greatest of his funeral sermons. "Her house was a Court in the conversation of the best, and an Almshouse in feeding the poore. God gave her such a comelinesse as, though she were not proud of it, yet she was so content with it as not to goe about to mend it by any Art. And for her Attire, it was never sumptuous, never sordid, but alwayes agreeable to her quality and agreeable to her company." With this sermon George Herbert printed his *PARENTALIA*, a series of Latin poems in honor of her who, as he says, *brought him into one world and shaped his course for another*. The second of these poems gives a vivid picture of her orderly domestic life.

Her husband, Sir Richard Herbert, dying in 1597, when George was but four years old, the care of her estate and the education of her children fell into her highly competent hands. About a year later she removed to Oxford, where Edward had entered the University. Here George lived with her about four years preparing under tutors for more advanced classical training. The remainder

of her life was spent in London and Chelsea. Her loveliness was of the unfading sort. It enabled her in 1609 to enter into a daring yet happy second marriage with Sir John Danvers, the younger brother of the Earl of Danby. At this time she was, as Donne says in his funeral sermon on her, over forty years old and already the mother of ten children. Sir John was barely twenty, but as handsome as she. "His complexion was so exceedingly beautiful and fine," says Aubrey, "that people would come after him in the street to admire. He had a very fine fancy, which lay chiefly for gardens and architecture." He proved a kind stepfather to George Herbert. A genial, irresponsible man he was, whom everybody liked so long as he was young, and who had no difficulty in marrying well three times; but who after the death of his masterful first wife fell into debt and bewilderment. Though he had been one of the gentlemen attending the King, yet "being neglected by his brother," says Clarendon, "and having by a vain expense in his way of living contracted a vast debt which he knew not how to pay, and being a proud formal weak man," he became one of the Regicides. When he died, in 1655, "he was to both political parties as great an object of scorn and detestation as any man in the kingdom."

With such a double inheritance of soldierly force and intellectual refinement, with decided originality and freedom from convention on both

sides, and with wealth, eminent family, and great traditions, George Herbert in 1605 entered Westminster School. Lancelot Andrewes was the Dean and Richard Ireland, Master. During his four years there his literary bent declared itself. He was admired for his classical scholarship. Here he made his first essays in verse, in Latin, and in ecclesiasticism, — the three fields in which he was subsequently to win distinction. Though but a boy, he attacked Andrew Melville (1545–1622), the scholarly leader of the Presbyterian party, in a number of Latin Epigrams, which were judged good enough to be passed from hand to hand and to encourage their author to continue them after entering the University. In 1609 he won a scholarship at Trinity College, Cambridge, and took his Bachelor's degree three years later. In the year of his entrance he wrote the first of his English poems which have been preserved, two sonnets addressed to his mother. In them he expressed his intention of becoming a religious poet. In the year when he took his degree, 1612, Prince Henry died, the popular heir to the Crown. The grief of the nation was deep, and was sung by all the poets of the day, — by Browne, Chapman, Donne, Drayton, Drummond, Heywood, Sylvester, Wither. With these men Herbert joined. His first printed pieces were two Latin Elegies on the Prince, contributed to a volume issued by the University of Cambridge. Two years later he became a Fellow of his College,

and an instructor in rhetoric. At the same time he began the systematic study of divinity. To the scholar's life and the priesthood he had been destined from early youth. His mother selected the priesthood for him, and his own better judgment approved.

But during these years, while he was winning *academick praise* as a clerical scholar and man of letters, he shone in other things as well. The passion for perfection was in his blood. This, joined with his love of beauty and his pride of birth, lent distinction to whatever he produced, though limiting its amount. "He was blest with a natural elegance both in his behaviour, his tongue, and his pen," says Walton. "If during this time he exprest any error, it was that he kept himself too much retir'd and at too great a distance with all his inferiours, and his cloaths seemed to prove that he put too great a value on his parts and parentage." Herbert shared heartily in the temper of a time which, delighting in every species of intellectual complexity, made its clothes as fantastic as its verses. In 1615, when the King visited Cambridge, the Vice-Chancellor was obliged to set bounds to personal display and issued the following order: "Considering the fearful enormitie and excess of apparell seen in all degrees, as namely, strange pekadivelas, vast bands, huge cuffs, shoe-roses, tufts, locks and topps of hair, unbecoming that modesty and carridge of students in so renowned a

University, it is straightly charged that no graduate or student presume to wear any other apparell or ornaments, especially at the time of his Majestie's abode in the towne, than such only as the statutes and laudable customs of this University do allow, upon payne of forfeiture of 6 shillings and 8 pence for every default." That Herbert himself was not averse to pekadivelas and shoe-roses, either in these or in later days, is hinted by Oley in his Preface to THE COUNTRY PARSON: "I have not offered to describe that person of his, which afforded so unusual a contesseration of elegancies and set of rarities to the beholder."

For such *genteel humour*, and for tastes no less elegant in books, Herbert's income proved insufficient. The eldest son, Edward Herbert, had granted each of his brothers an annuity of £30 from their father's estate, and George had also the income of his Fellowship. But in 1617 he writes two letters to his stepfather, begging for more money, urging the expenses of a university life, his great need of books, the cost of sickness with its special articles of diet, and proposing the *doubling my annuity now upon condition that I should surcease from all title to it after I enter'd into a benefice*. He promises if this is done that he *will for ever after cease his clamorous and greedy bookish requests*. During these years he kept a riding horse and apparently also a small country house, at Newmarket, the racing town near Cambridge.

III

HITHERTO throughout this period of Education Herbert has been aiming, delayingly and through much dallying with social display and graceful literature, at the priesthood. Now this deeper aim, which gave his life the little steadiness it had hitherto possessed, becomes shaken, and he enters that second period of his career which I have ventured to call his period of Hesitation. For eight years dreams of political eminence sway him, subordinating though never altogether destroying his plan to become a priest. Only when these glittering hopes have failed is there a recurrence to the earlier and more vital purpose.

In 1619 Sir Francis Nethersole resigned the Oratorship of Cambridge University. Herbert eagerly sought to become his successor, and brought to bear on the appointing powers the solicitations of influential friends. Sir Francis, however, had suggested that *this place being civil may divert me too much from Divinity, at which, not without cause, he thinks I aim. But I have wrote him back that this dignity hath no such earthiness in it but it may very well be joined with heaven; or if it had to others, yet to me it should not, for aught I yet knew.* The attractions of the office he thus describes in a letter to his stepfather:

The Orator's place is the finest place in the University, though not the gainfullest; yet that will be

about 30l per an. But the commodiousness is beyond the revenue ; for the Orator writes all the University letters, makes all the orations, be it to King, Prince, or whatever comes to the University ; to requite these pains, he takes place next the doctors, is at all their assemblies and meetings, and sits above the proctors, is regent, or non-regent at his pleasure, and such like gaynesses, which will please a young man well.

Herbert obtained the Oratorship, and held the place eight years. Two of his orations and many of his official letters have come down to us. They show him to have been a skilful courtier, but do him little credit as a moral or intellectual man. Adulation was common in that day. One can only say that Herbert practised it with the force and audacity habitual in his undertakings. The year in which he was seeking the Oratorship he selected as the piece to be read with his rhetoric class an oration of King James, instead of one by Cicero or Demosthenes, and this "he analyzed, showed the concinnity of the parts, the propriety of the phrase, the height and power of it to move the affections, the style utterly unknown to the ancients, who could not conceive what kingly eloquence was ; in respect of which those noted demagogi were but hirelings and tribolary rhetoricians." (Hacket's Life of Archbishop Williams, I, 175.) He first attracted the notice of the King by a letter written in 1620 in acknowledgment

of the gift to the University of the King's book, *Basilikon Doron*. "This letter was writ in such excellent Latin," says Walton, "was so full of conceits and all the expressions so suted to the genius of the King that he inquired the Orator's name and then ask'd William, Earl of Pembroke, if he knew him? whose answer was, 'That he knew him very well, and that he was his kinsman; but he lov'd him more for his learning and vertue than for that he was of his name and family.' At which answer the King smil'd and asked the Earl leave 'That he might love him too; for he took him to be the Jewel of that University.' " Thereafter, when the King went to hunt at Royston, near Cambridge, Herbert was much in his company. "A laudible ambition to be something more than he then was drew him often from Cambridge to attend the King wheresoever the Court was; and he seldom look'd towards Cambridge, unless the King were there, but then he never fail'd; and at other times left the manage of his Orator's place to his learned friend Mr. Herbert Thorndike," i. e. to his secretary.

Such assiduity soon brought its rewards, the most honorable among them being the powerful friends acquired. The Duke of Lenox, the Duke of Richmond, the Marquis of Hamilton, became his patrons. In the train of the King in 1620 was Lord Bacon. In that year Herbert had written him an official letter thanking him for the gift

to the University of his Instauration Magna, and a subsequent letter begging him to check the London booksellers who, *having an eye to their own advantage rather than to that of the public, are longing for certain monopolies; from which circumstance we fear that the price of books will be increased and our privileges diminished.* This was the beginning of a friendship which continued with increasing closeness till Bacon's death.

In the year that Herbert became Orator, 1619, he printed a Latin Elegy on the death of Queen Anne. In 1623 Walton says the King presented him the lay Rectorship of Whitford with an income of £100. No duties were attached to the place. It was a sinecure which had formerly been held by Sir Philip Sidney. It should be said, however, that Herbert's name does not appear as Rector in the Whitford Church records.

Herbert was now aspiring to something far higher than his Oratorship. Sir Francis Nethersole, the preceding Orator, had become secretary to the Queen of Bohemia, the much loved Princess Elizabeth. Sir Robert Naunton, who held the Oratorship before Nethersole, had become one of the English Secretaries of State. To become such a Secretary himself was Herbert's ambition from 1620 to 1625. Nor was it improbable that he would reach it. From 1619 to 1624 his brother Edward was the English Ambassador at the French Court. In 1623 his brother Henry became

Master of the Revels to King James. Few nobles were more influential than Herbert's great kinsman, the Earl of Pembroke. Herbert accordingly turned aside from divinity to master French, Spanish, and Italian. He even inclined to abandon altogether the scholar's life and go abroad. But the strong will of his mother would not allow this final abandonment of the priesthood, and Herbert remained in England.

When Prince Charles and Buckingham came home from Spain in 1623, unsuccessful in forming a Spanish alliance, Herbert delivered and published a long oration of welcome in which, while as adulatory as ever, he had the courage to protest against the war to which the party of Buckingham now inclined. The historian S. R. Gardiner believes that this courageous stand destroyed Herbert's prospects of promotion. Oley says that the secretaryship was once within his grasp. But in 1623 died the Duke of Richmond; in the following year, the Duke of Lenox; in 1625 the King and the Marquis of Hamilton; and in 1626 Lord Bacon. His mother died a year later. Herbert resigned the Oratorship, and his period of Hesitation, *gaynesses*, and ambition was at an end.

IV

FROM this point onward Herbert's life is best studied in connection with his poetry. That is not the case with its two earlier periods, those of Education and Hesitation. In regard to the many years included in these, his writings give little information. Groups I-V of the poems were probably for the most part written during the second of these periods. They report his early thoughts and ideals, but not the incidents of his life. When we turn to Groups VI-XI, covering the last two periods of Crisis and Consecration, the verse becomes strongly biographic. Through it alone can the significance of what is happening be followed. The events that occur, though few, are weighty. It is they which finally bring the man to adequate expression. Without constant reference to those events the later poetry is unintelligible, nor can the events be understood without the poetry. Any account, accordingly, of these two most important periods in the life of Herbert must be merely preparatory to the poems and Prefaces of Groups VI-XI.

Had Herbert died at the point to which we have now brought him, he would have left no name in letters, state, or church. A few Latin poems and orations, not quite half his English verse, — the portion least interesting and which ultimately received most alteration, — would alone show the

tendencies of this fastidious scholar, courtier, and churchman. None of his prose was written, nor had he yet adopted his priestly calling. Whatever distinguishes him to-day had no existence then. Yet more than four fifths of his life were gone. Of these ineffective years we may say, what he has himself said in another connection, that *he ranne, but all he brought was fome*.

The remaining six years were Herbert's blossoming time. Forces which had long been at work in him blindly, slackly, and inconsistently, now under the pressure of affliction gradually took control, and shaped his formless life into a thing of beauty. That dilatoriness which seems ever a sad and necessary part of a poet's equipment had done its work. It had brought him enrichment, training, and perhaps at the last a quickening terror.

*Fain would I here have made abode,
But I was quicken'd by my houre,*

he says of his Cambridge days. Herbert saw life slipping away in pleasant Cambridge, and suddenly wondered if there still were time to accomplish his twin projects. We have seen how early he had resolved to be a poet and a priest. A beginning had been made at the one, and he had steadily evaded the other. In his last six years he was to become both in a notable degree. The crisis in his affairs was induced by the following circumstances.

In 1626 Laud's opponent, Bishop Williams of Lincoln, appointed Herbert lay Prebendary of the parish of Leighton, ten miles from Huntingdon. The appointment was apparently intended, like the previous one at Whitford, to yield a stipend without duties; but it was accepted in a different spirit. The parish was small, the church itself in ruins. No service had been held in it for twenty years. Its roof had fallen, its walls were crumbling, its interior was decayed. It has been asserted that Herbert never visited the place. But the adjoining manor had belonged to his friend the Duke of Lenox; and five miles away lived one who was subsequently to be closely associated with him, Nicholas Ferrar. Through these or other agencies, now unknown, Herbert became deeply interested in the rehabilitation of the church. He solicited, he contributed, funds. He tried to induce Ferrar to take his place as Prebendary. Failing in this, he persuaded him to take charge of the long labors of reparation. These continued till after his own death. In his Will he leaves £15 to Leighton Church. The building is a large and beautiful one. The additions made by Herbert and Ferrar in windows, roof, and furnishings have a plain solidity and suitableness which is very attractive. One of Herbert's ecclesiastical arrangements noted by Walton is of decided interest as indicating a sympathy with the Puritan estimate of sermons. "By his order the reading pew and pulpit were

a little distant from each other and both of an equal height; for he would often say, *They should neither have a precedency or priority of the other; but that prayer and preaching, being equally useful, might agree like brethren.*" It is not easy to see why on a church with which he apparently had little connection, Herbert should have spent so much of his love, his thought, and his means. Perhaps the undertaking, expressing as it did increased interest in religious matters, quieted his conscience for the long evasion of sacred work.

The year after Leighton Church was begun, Herbert resigned his Oratorship and withdrew from the University. This grave step immediately followed the death of his mother. In memory of her he published a series of Latin verses full of careful appreciation and respect, though not remarkable for either affection or piety. The only human being who ever perceptibly swayed his life was removed; but her remembered influence proved quite as compulsive as her imperious presence. It was she who originally chose the priesthood for him; she who maintained his purpose during periods of slackness; she who hindered his going abroad and finally abandoning that calling. Now she was dead, her purpose unfulfilled. His own courtly hopes were ended, his health was seriously impaired. He was engaged, too, with her approval, in a work of church building which brought him into contact with Ferrar, a man of extreme

religious originality. Many influences without him and within coöperated, and at the end of three years produced their ripening effect. These bitter years of solitude, self-examination, search after health, and reinstatement of early resolve are depicted in the sixth Group of his poems. They were years spent in retirement. Sometimes he was at his mother's home in Chelsea, where he would meet Dr. Donne, who had hesitated almost as long as himself about taking orders; sometimes at Woodford in Essex, his courtly brother Henry's country place; sometimes at Dauntsey in Wiltshire, the estate of the Earl of Danby. At the neighboring town of Baynton, in 1629, when health and spirits were somewhat restored and he was just entering his thirty-sixth year, he suddenly married Jane Danvers, a relative of the Earl of Danby, a woman of beauty and independent means. She brought him no children, but the marriage was a happy one. After Herbert's death she married Sir Robert Cook of Highnam Court, Gloucestershire. How long she remained a widow is uncertain. Walton thought it "five years," or in another edition, "about six." But as Sir Robert Cook himself died only ten years after Herbert, and she had borne him three sons and a daughter, her period of widowhood must have been brief. She died in 1663.

V

ALMOST as suddenly as he had married, Herbert in the following year accepted the living of Fuggleston-cum-Bemerton and began his brief period of Consecration. The greatness of the change is well stated by Charles Cotton, who in 1672, commending Walton for the volume of his *Lives* which had recently appeared, describes Herbert as

“ He whose education,
Manners and parts, by high applauses blown,
Was deeply tainted by Ambition,

“ And fitted for a court, made that his aim;
At last, without regard to birth or name,
For a poor country cure does all disclaim;

“ Where, with a soul composed of harmonies,
Like a sweet swan, he warbles as he dies
His Maker’s praise and his own obsequies.”

In excuse for Herbert’s long hesitation and secular ambition, it should be borne in mind that in his day, as Cotton hints, the priesthood was not regarded as altogether suitable for a gentleman of birth. In *THE COUNTRY PARSON*, Ch. XXVIII, Herbert speaks of *the generall ignominy which is cast upon the profession*. Donne, in his *Lines to Mr. Tilman After He Had Taken Orders*, congratulates him on putting aside “the lay-scornings

of the ministry." Walton quotes Herbert's remark that *the iniquity of the late times have made clergymen meanly valued and the sacred name of priest contemptible*. And Oley says in his Preface to THE COUNTRY PARSON: "I have heard sober men censure him as a man that did not manage his brave parts to his best advantage and preferment, but lost himself in an humble way. That was the phrase. I well remember it."

Herbert was instituted to the Rectorship by John Davenant, Bishop of Salisbury, a leader of the Puritan party, on April 26, 1630, five months before he was ordained priest. Even then he was not able at once to reside in his parish. The Rectory was so out of repair that it had not been occupied by his predecessor, Dr. Curle, who had a house fifteen miles away. With this arrangement Herbert was not content. He would live among his people. He reconstructed the Rectory at a cost of £200. Aubrey says: "The old house was very ruinous. Here he built a very handsome house for the minister of brick and made a good garden and walks;" and Walton, that "he hasted to get the Parish Church repair'd, then to beautifie the Chappel (which stands near his house) and that at his own great charge."

Less than three miles from Salisbury, in its extensive Park, stands Wilton House, one of the stateliest mansions in England. It was built on the foundations of an ancient Abbey, from the

designs of Hans Holbein. Its owner, William Herbert, the great Earl of Pembroke, died a fortnight before Herbert was instituted, and was succeeded in the Earldom by his brother Philip. This house of his kinsman must have been a frequent visiting place for Herbert during the few years of his priesthood. At its gate stood the considerable church of Fuggleston or Fulston St. Peter. Around the church in Herbert's day there was probably something of a hamlet. Here lived and ministered Herbert's Curate, Nathaniel Bostock. But the parish embraced also the villages of Quidhampton and Bemerton, the three together having a population of not more than three hundred souls. At Bemerton was the small chapel of St. Andrew, forty-six feet long by eighteen wide, seating rather more than fifty people. With this chapel Herbert's ministry is particularly identified. Aubrey writes: "George Herbert was chaplaine to Philip Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery. His lordship gave him a benefice at Bemerton, a pittifull little chappell of ease to Foughelston." The chapel is almost a part of the Rectory, which stands opposite it and only forty feet away. On this chapel he looked from his study window; in it he read prayers every day; during the time of his feeble health he must have preached oftener here than at Fulston; and here, in the floor beside the altar, he was buried. Though many changes have been made in the little building since he died, they are not such as disturb its

main features. Herbert would recognize it to-day. What his income at Bemerton was, I am unable to ascertain. I find it stated that one of his successors in 1692, John Norris, the Platonist and poet, received £70. But Herbert was not dependent on the income of his parish.

The Rectory across the road has doubled its size since Herbert lived there, and most of its rooms are changed. His study remains and his large garden, which slopes pleasantly down to the small river Wiley. An old medlar-tree is connected by tradition with his planting. Across a mile of intervening meadows rises the spire of Salisbury Cathedral. At the Rectory the household consisted of himself, his wife, three nieces, daughters of his sister Margaret Vaughan, — one of whom, dying a year before himself, left him £500, — and, as appears in his Will, two men-servants and four maids. In this house were spent the three years which give significance to Herbert's life.

Cut off as he now largely was from the companionship to which he had been accustomed, and with little opportunity for other forms of outward action, his energies turned within. Things of the mind claimed him with an absorption to which hitherto he had been a stranger. With unwonted persistence he now pursued three lines of ideal construction, — music, writing, and the services of the church, — and in them obtained a needed relief from isolation, loneliness, and disappointed hopes.

The neighboring Salisbury afforded two varieties of music. A private club of musicians drew him each week into its friendly and melodious company; and listening to the mighty harmonies at the Cathedral, he could

Without a bodie move

Rising and falling with their wings.

Then at Bemerton his lute was always ready to aid his voice in giving fuller expression to his own songs. In short, music seems to have been his one diversion.

How elaborately he undertook to extract from the ritual of his church every power and beautiful significance, Walton has explained, Herbert's own COUNTRY PARSON shows, and in the Preface to Group VII I have discussed. No man ever entered more profoundly into the priesthood. These brief years were indeed a Consecration. Herbert endeavored to empty himself, to discharge his former desires, and to become a colorless medium through which the divine reason, austerity, and radiance might healingly shine. The conception of the preacher which with his usual ardor, elaboration, tenderness, and frequent rebellion too, he sought during these bleak years to attain he has announced in his poem of THE WINDOWS:

Lord, how can man preach thy eternall word?

He is a brittle crazie glasse,

*Yet in thy temple thou dost him afford
This glorious and transcendent place
To be a window, through thy grace.*

*But when thou dost anneal in glasse thy storie,
Making thy life to shine within
The holy Preachers, then the light and glorie
More rev'rend grows, and more doth win.*

The full record of this failing and triumphant time will be found in the poems and Prefaces of Groups VII-XI.

But if Herbert now pressed eagerly forward to attain in a time which he knew must be brief that priestly ideal which he had cherished throughout his dilatory life, no less eager was he to complete the literary ambitions of his youth. Toward these aims much was already accomplished. Bacon, Donne, Ferrar, his intimates, knew before he came to Bemerton that he was a skilful poet of the special type which he had early resolved to become. But the amount of his verse hitherto produced was small, only occasionally was it vitalized with personal experience, and none of it was as yet published. He had much more to say. His art was never so subtle or harmonious as now. The deeper religious life he was leading illuminated his old topic and revealed its finer shades. Yet he felt clear premonitions of his approaching end.

*The harbingers are come. See, see their mark!
White is their colour, and behold my head.*

*But must they have my brain? Must they dispark
Those sparkling notions which therein were bred?
Must dulnesse turn me to a clod?
Yet have they left me, "Thou art still my God."*

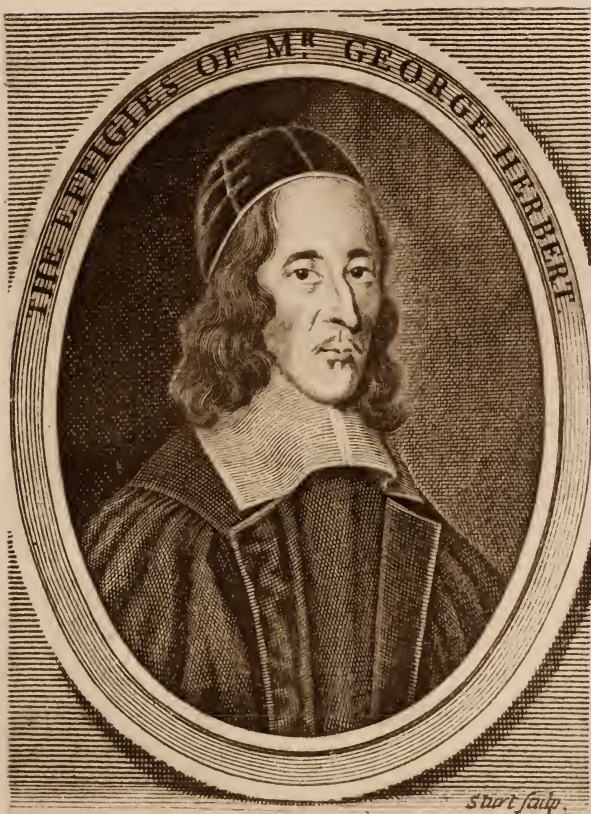
Under such pressure, he who was not naturally productive, but by temperament meagre, critical, and postponing, forced from his fading powers an amount of delicate literature which would have been creditable to the most robust of writers. Not only do something like half of his poems come from these three years, but during them his COUNTRY PARSON also was written. Possibly to this time is due his exquisite translation of CORNARO ON TEMPERANCE. Only five months before his death he read and elaborately annotated Ferrar's translation of The Divine Considerations of Valdesso. How much more he wrote we do not know. Walton says of Herbert's widow: "This Lady Cook had preserv'd many of Mr. Herbert's private writings which she intended to make publick; but they and Highnam House were burnt together by the late Rebels, and so lost to posterity." To this should be added Aubrey's remark: "He also writt a folio in Latin which, because the parson of Highnam could not read, his widowe (then wife to Sir Robert Cooke) condemned to the uses of good houswifry. This account I had from Mr. Arnold Cooke, one of Sir Robert Cooke's sons, whom I desired to ask his mother-in-law for Mr. G. Herbert's MSS."

When one adds to his manifold literary undertakings the care of his scattered parish and the beginnings of family life, it is evident that these were busy years. Were they too busy? Might not those *rheumes and agues* to which his frame, feeble from childhood, had always been disposed, have been checked in their onward movement toward consumption by a less rigorous life? It cannot be known; and in view of what that rigor accomplished, there is little room for regret. The exact date of his death is not known, but he was buried on March 3, 1633.

VI

THE Herbert whose contrasted periods of life are here exhibited, and who is studied in minuter detail hereafter, will be found to differ considerably from him who appears in Walton's Life. My account may consequently be received with distrust. Walton's book is one of the glories of our literature. It is true he had no acquaintance with Herbert. He saw him only once, at Lady Herbert's funeral. But he had documents which have now perished. Out of them and out of his own attractive personality he has woven a Life of Herbert which few pieces of biography exceed in unity, vividness, and convincing power. The ease of Walton's account and its apparent waywardness add to its charm and the impression of its veracity. In spite of some

petty inaccuracies, especially in dates, I believe that what Walton says is substantially true. But there is much which he does not say; and in general, his book should be judged rather as a piece of art than as even-handed history. In painting a glowing picture an artist selects a point of view, and to what is visible from that point subordinates all else. So Walton works. He paints us the Saint of Bemerton. And while too honest to conceal discordant facts from him who will search his pages, he contrives to throw so strong a light on Herbert's three consecrated years that few readers notice how unlike these are to his vacillating thirty-six. Walton's fascinating portraiture has taken so firm a hold on the popular imagination that it may truly be said to constitute at present the most serious obstacle to a cool assessment of Herbert. To refer to the more secular and literary sides of that complex character seems a kind of sacrilege. Yet Walton himself furnishes material for his own correction. To this I have directed attention, supplementing it with the statements of Oley, Lord Herbert, Aubrey, and other contemporaries, and making large use also of Herbert's own estimates of himself contained in his poems and prose writings. By turning to these original sources I hope my readers will be able to perceive the romantic coloring of Walton, to allow for it, and to enjoy that skilful portraiture the more.



Behold an Orator, Divinely sage,
 The Prophet and Apostle of that age.
 Vient hie his Porch and Temple, you shall see
 The Body of Divine Philosophy.
 Examine well the Lines of his dead Face,
 Therein you may discern Wisdom and Grace.
 Now if the Shell so lovely doth appear,
 How Orient was the Pearl Imprison'd here!

II

TRAITS OF THE MAN

TRAITS OF THE MAN

WITH these events in the life of Herbert before us, let us examine those features of his complex character which if misconceived prevent an understanding of his writings. A character is interesting about in proportion to the opposing traits which it harmonizes. And nowhere are such interesting characters so common as among the men who met the conflicting forces of the later Renaissance. Every part of their being responds to a multitude of calls, and yet they impress us as highly individual men. I shall trace the rich and harmonious diversity of Herbert in his physical structure, his temperamental habits, his intellect, and his religious nature.

I

WE do not certainly know how Herbert looked. No contemporary portrait of him exists. If one was ever painted, it has perished. An allusion to a portrait has been sought in a line of THE POSIE, where, speaking of his intended motto, he says, *This by my picture, in my book, I write.* But a gracefully turned phrase is no evidence of historic fact. An early engraving, however, has come down to us, preserved in a triple form. In

Walton's *Lives* (1670) there was printed a portrait of Herbert, signed R. White. In the tenth edition of Herbert's poems (1674), the first to include Walton's *Life*, this picture appeared again, changed slightly, but bearing the same signature. In the thirteenth edition (1709) is a coarse reëngraving of White's plate by John Sturt (1658–1730), White's pupil. All later portraits of Herbert are fanciful modifications of these early prints. Hitherto these have been our only means for arriving at a knowledge of his face. What assurance of authenticity do they possess?

Walton and the men of his day knew Herbert's appearance and would certainly demand a picture of some verisimilitude. We must suppose that the likeness of Herbert here presented rests on some accredited original. The engraver, Robert White, says the *Dictionary of National Biography*, "was the most esteemed and industrious portrait engraver of his age. His plates number about four hundred. He was celebrated for his original portraits, which he drew in pencil on vellum with great delicacy and finish." An original portrait of Herbert this cannot be; for White was not born until 1645, twelve years after Herbert died. But it may still be an accurate likeness, for White engraved from paintings also.

I believe, however, we can now carry the traditional engraving a step nearer to its original. In 1902 I learned that there was an early drawing of

Herbert in private hands in Salisbury, and I procured an introduction to its owner, George Young. Most generously he allowed me to examine his picture and even to photograph it for this book. It has not been published before. It is drawn in pencil on vellum with a delicacy of line impossible to reproduce. The size is substantially as it appears in the frontispiece of this volume. For many generations the picture has been in Mr. Young's family, a family descended in a collateral line from Izaak Walton. Of its origin and history nothing is known. In the clear space by Herbert's left shoulder stands the inscription "R. White delin," in White's handwriting. Is this, then, the original drawing made by White from some painting, the drawing from which the two pictures for Walton were afterwards engraved? Whoever compares it with those engravings will have little doubt of it. The position, the clothing, and the features are identical. There is the same curl of the collar, the same indentation of cap and gown. I notice only three small points of difference: in the drawing a few straggling hairs appear at the top of the forehead below the cap, the line of the collar is slightly open below the chin, and the body of the gown where the right sleeve joins it is visible all the way down. But these are just such changes as might naturally occur in the coarser work of engraving. The fundamental difference, and that which stamps the

drawing as prior in date, is its superior subtlety in the interpretation of character. Indeed, I know no written criticism of Herbert which exhibits him with such fulness, complexity, and likelihood. Here is high breeding, scholarship, devoutness, disappointment, humor, fastidiousness, pathos, pride. This priest has moved in courtly circles and convinces us that he was once alive; the engravings, while reporting the same general features, have little play of life. They present a meagre ascetic. In the process of engraving, whether conducted by White or by some journeyman, the vitality of the drawing has disappeared. The lines have stiffened. Perhaps a nature so subtle as Herbert's lends itself more readily to the pencil than to the burin. Yet I think no one can fail to see that the three pictures have a single source.

What that source was we can only surmise. The style of portraiture is strikingly like that of Van Dyck, like him in both his strength and his limitations. Van Dyck was in England in 1621, probably in 1629, and certainly early in 1632, in the latter year being knighted by King Charles. He painted many portraits both at the Court and at Wilton House. Wilton House is to-day full of the Pembrokes who associated with Herbert, fixed in perpetual and elusive charm by the witchery of Van Dyck. Herbert himself, as a kinsman of the house, already a man of note, and living but a mile away, might naturally enough have been painted too.

A memorandum of Aubrey's, contained in his Lives, shows that a portrait of him was then believed to exist: "George Herbert — (ask) cozen Nan Garnet pro (his) picture; if not, her aunt Cooke." Whether the painter was Van Dyck or some other lover of human refinements, in this frontispiece we have for the first time a singularly vivid and subtle representation of Herbert drawn by one selected for the task by Walton himself.

White's portrait accords well with verbal descriptions of Herbert. The consumptive face is long and gaunt, with prominent cheek-bones. Abundant curly hair falls to the shoulders. A high brow strongly overarches widely parted eyes. The nose is large and with a Roman curve, the mouth markedly sensitive. In some verses printed in *THE TEMPLE* of 1674, the first edition containing a portrait of Herbert, the unknown author writes:

*Examine well the Lines of his dead Face,
Therein you may discern Wisdom and Grace.*

That is the combination noticeable in the drawing. Walton says of him that "he was for his person of a stature inclining towards tallness; his body was very strait, and so far from being cumbered with too much flesh that he was lean to an extremity. His aspect was chearful, and his speech and motion did both declare him a Gentleman." In his poem *THE SIZE*, Herbert has this portrait-like stanza:

*A Christian's state and case
Is not a corpulent, but a thinne and spare
Yet active strength; whose long and bonie face
Content and care
Do seem to equally divide.*

Oley notices the elegance of his person, and Aubrey says that "he was a very fine complexion and consumptive." That he was consumptive, inclining, too, from childhood to indigestion, colds, and fevers, both he himself and Walton repeatedly declare. But his face, like his writings, reveals an intellect somewhat excessive for the body that bears it. This prominence in Herbert of the nobler traits gave to his total appearance an exaltation above the ordinary. Mr. Duncon told Walton that "at his first view of Mr. Herbert he saw majesty and humility so reconcil'd in his looks and behaviour as begot in him an awful reverence for his person."

II

WITH his fragility, too, and insufficiency of bodily stock was associated great refinement of the senses. In Herbert's constitution there was nothing dull, stolid, or inclining to asceticism. Sight, hearing, taste, smell, have all left in his verse their record of swift response. Out of an odor Herbert has constructed one of his daintiest poems.

HIS BANQUET is perfumed throughout. In ten other poems fragrances are mentioned. It indicates his revival from illness that he can *once more smell the dew and rain*. With him the word *sweet* is more apt to indicate sweetness of smell than of taste. Twice he gives details about the pomander, an Elizabethan substitute for our scent-bottle. *Dust* he finds peculiarly offensive. One of his descriptions of the bad man is that he is *guiltie of dust and sinne*. This sensitiveness of smell appears equally in THE COUNTRY PARSON, where we are repeatedly warned to *keep all sweet and clean*. The Parson's house is to be *very plain, but clean, whole, and sweet — as sweet as his garden can make*; and his clothes are to be *without spots or dust or smell*. He is to call at the *poorest cottage, though it smell never so lothsomly*. And this insistence on smell as the final token of nicety is idealized in a maxim of THE CHURCH-PORCH:

*Let thy minde's sweetnesse have his operation
Upon thy body, clothes, and habitation.*

Clothes were always matters of importance to Herbert. Their proprieties are discussed at some length in THE CHURCH-PORCH, and Herbert's *gentle humour* for them is repeatedly referred to by Walton and Oley.

Herbert, too, was far from dull of taste. Vivid allusions to food and drink abound. He knows the temptations of both, but dreads more those of food.

He knows how to *stay at the third glasse*; but with his delicate digestion and strong appetite, the quantity to be eaten is harder to regulate. He studies diet; he translates CORNARO ON TEMPERANCE; he has numberless precepts of restraint, none of which would be necessary if he were not constitutionally inclined to excess. The tightness of the rein shows the mettle of the horse.

How alert is his eye, even the casual reader perceives. His many pictures of natural objects have each their individual character, and he records facts with a startling sharpness. *Birds sip and straight lift up their head. Frost-nipt sunnes look sadly. Flowers depart to see their mother-root when they have blown. In terram violae capite inclinantur opaco. Somebody comes puffing by in silks that whistle. Of painted windows we hear how colours and light, in one when they combine and mingle, bring a strong regard and awe. And of leaves, The wind blew them underfoot, where rude unhallow'd steps do crush and grinde their beauteous glories.* Or again,

*We are the trees whom shaking fastens more,
While blustering windes destroy the wanton bowres,
And ruffle all their curious knots and store.*

Herbert has none of Vaughan's mystic brooding over nature. Physical and mental facts are seldom blended. But while chiefly occupied with inner states, he casts keen glances over the world with-

out, delights in its beauty, and by some unusual word marks an observation as his own.

The training of Herbert's ear is more generally known than that of his other senses. He sang, played on the viol or lute, and was fond of the organ. Music was at that time a regular part of the education of a gentleman. Milton was trained in it. Poetry was still thought of as song. Herbert's lines were intended to be accompanied by an instrument. Though in consumption, he sang them until a few days before he died. Throughout his life — as Oley, Walton, and his own poems testify — music was his passion. He counts it his chief means of escaping bodily pain.

*Sweetest of sweets, I thank you ! When displeasure
Did through my bodie wound my minde,
You took me thence, and in your house of pleasure
A daintie lodging me assign'd.*

This sketch of Herbert's exquisite physical organization, a necessary equipment for poetic work, will have disclosed that his senses were more fine than full, that it is rather the intellectual than the sensuous aspect of objects which appeals to him. Each of our senses reports to us in double terms. We both see and observe; we hear and listen; we smell or taste and perceive. Some minds fasten on one of these sides of experience, some on the other. Different mental types arise accordingly. To Herbert the immediate moment is never the

rapturous affair it is to Giles Fletcher or William Browne. While feeling it, he is looking beyond, correlating it, studying its significance, and judging how far it will serve the purposes of a life. The pure senses are consequently subordinate powers in Herbert's world, and never receive that honorable training nor are trusted with that large control which is theirs in the poetry of Chaucer, Sidney, and Spenser.

III

THE only temptations which he mentions with anything like terror are those of idleness and women. *Lust*, a common word with him both in prose and verse, does not mean what it often does in writings of his time, a general desire for pleasure. It means the specific inclination toward women. This in his eyes is always evil. He married late, after a life spent partly in the cloister and partly among the gay and loose. His brother Edward made a mercantile marriage, and was boastfully unfaithful to it. He himself never conceived love in our fashion as a mysterious power uniting the two worlds of sense and spirit. These remained in his thought steadily hostile. *Flesh, though exalted, keeps his grass, and cannot turn to soule.* To him woman is always a temptation and disturbance; and this opinion is as deeply embedded in *THE COUNTRY PARSON*, written after

his marriage, as in his verse. His discussion of marriage in Chapter IX, on The Parson's State of Life, is essentially monastic. Marriage is for man a mere escape from worse ills, though it may be *the good instrument of God to bring women to heaven*. No honorable mention of a woman occurs in his writings, if we except the somewhat artificial lamentations for his mother in the Latin PARENTALIA, and Walton's statement that when he was dying he said: *These eyes shall see my master and Saviour Jesus, and with him see my dear mother*. Even the Virgin Mary he thinks of as but an instrument in effecting the birth of Christ, not as possessing distinctive virtues of her own (ANAGRAM, and TO ALL ANGELS AND SAINTS, l. 11). Allusions in the third stanza of THE PILGRIMAGE and elsewhere make it probable that once at Cambridge Herbert found *the wilde of passion* to be a *wasted place, but sometimes rich*. This experience forms the subject of one of his two poems on VANITIE, and it remained with him long as a terrifying remembrance. In one of his last and most anguished poems he cries as if pursued, *What is this womankinde which I can wink into a blacknesse and distaste?*

Such inability to comprehend the worth and place of woman is the more remarkable when we recall the great influence which his mother exercised over his life. A marvellous woman she must have been, combining in herself many excellences of both man and woman. Donne speaks of her as

having "that perplexing eye which equally claims love and reverence." From her Herbert obtained much of his refinement, much, too, of his stimulus to action. In return he gave her abundant respect and obedience, but not apparently intimate affection. *Severa parens*, he calls her. *Tu radix, tu petra mihi firmissima mater*. Through her he never learned to honor womankind.

IV

TO estimate justly his second temptation, that of sloth, is more difficult; for vigor was in his stock on both sides. His fighting fathers reproduced themselves in his contentious brothers; and he himself, though checked by lassitudes, introspection, and physical frailty, certainly possessed a virile temper. This has left its mark in such poems as EMPLOYMENT, BUSINESSE, and CONSTANCIE. Though living in an age by no means listless, he warns his countrymen that their greatest danger is sloth, and bids his reader

*When thou dost purpose ought, (within thy power,)
Be sure to doe it, though it be but small.*

That he is able to go through a large amount of work in a brief time, and under adverse circumstances, is evident from what he accomplished in literature and parish labor during his three years at Bemerton.

But continually in Herbert double tendencies appear. He believed himself disposed to indolence, — *A slack and sleepie state of minde did oft possesse me.* Of no danger does he more frequently warn himself than of this. Was it real? I think so. It is true such reproaches sometimes spring from the exactions of a high standard, and may thus reveal a character the opposite of that which they assert. Being normally energetic, though subject to frequent weakness, Herbert may have felt with peculiar shame those low states where it is impossible to know how much of our slackness is attributable to an unresponsive body and how much to a feeble will. But when we recall how little able he showed himself, before he went to Bemerton, to fix on a task and adhere to it, how easily he accepted a life of elegant dependence, I believe we shall see that inaction was in some strange way a genuine, and not a mere poetic, temptation of this forcible man.

Lord Herbert in praising his brother George says: "He was not exempt from passion and choler, being infirmities to which all our race is subject; but that excepted, without reproach in his actions." The hastiness of temper in social relations here asserted beset Herbert also in the formation of plans. Speaking in AFFLICTION of the early proposition that he should become a priest, he says:

*My sudden soul caught at the place,
And made her youth and fierceness seek thy face.*

His soul was sudden, his first feeling about a plan hot and fierce. He repeats the adjective in *THE ANSWER*: *my fierce youth*. Walton's story of his marriage confirms the trait. He married Jane Danvers three days after he first saw her. I do not give the tale full credit. The lady was the daughter of his stepfather's cousin, her family — even according to Walton's account — being well known to him. She lived at Baynton, but a few miles from Dauntsey, where he frequently visited. Yet Walton's story must be substantially true, published, as it was, uncontradicted among those who knew the facts. Herbert certainly married but a few days after his engagement, and the headlong act was characteristic of him. He entered the priesthood in much the same way, years of hesitation ending with a sudden burst of decision. Thus it was throughout his life: precipitancy and irresolution, energy and delay, went ever hand in hand, each suspicious of its dangerous mate. He hesitated to act because he knew how prone he was to rashness; but he finally acted rashly in order to escape his besetting sin of delay. A vivid picture of this double temperament he has given in *THE ANSWER*, where he acknowledges to those

*Who think me eager, hot, and undertaking,
But in my prosecutions slack and small,*

that he is like an exhalation steaming swiftly up from some damp ground, as if hastening to the sky;

but *cooling by the way*, it soon dissipates itself in drops which weep over its lack of accomplishment. So Herbert was frequently called to mourn the slackness of his prosecution. Yet I think he does himself injustice in counting this slackness due to indolence. There is no idle fibre in his mind. It is *ever in warres*, delighting in difficulties, and moves with an instinctive aversion to the easy course. This, in fact, is its perpetual danger. *Thousands of notions in his brain do run*; and he cannot, like the rude practical person, promptly discover and discharge the unimportant ones. Time and energy are accordingly wasted. Years slip by, and this abnormally forcible man stands irresolute, bewildered by irreconcilable claims.

This strenuosity of temperament, dissipation of energy, and comparative ineffectiveness of result appear strikingly in the two main events of Herbert's life, as narrated in my first Essay. Early he proposed to become a priest and a poet. He held to both purposes for more than twenty years. He attained both, reaching such distinction in each as to become a pattern to after ages. Yet in each he conveys the impression of exceptional powers only half used. One hundred and sixty-nine short poems and less than three years in a small country parish represent his accomplishment. Ceaselessly working over his little roll of poems, he never brought them to perfection; and though he lived in one of the most formative periods of English

history, when new thoughts about church, state, and society were pouring in like a flood, the ferment left no trace in his writings, which might have been composed about equally well on a desert island. For the most part, he is concerned with the small needs of his own soul.

Rightly does Walton characterize him as "a lover of retiredness," for he was essentially unsocial. Acquainted though he was with many men and many minds, "His soul was like a star, and dwelt apart." It did not accept the interests of other men nor invite others to its own. Something of this was no doubt due to his sense of high birth and his consequent detachment from the crowd. He is always an aristocrat, free from vanity and not indisposed to oblige, but he does not turn toward the affairs of others. As I shall show in my next Essay, there were tendencies in his age inclining men to political abstention. The holy and scholarly of those days were prone to withdraw from the world for study and religion, and took the ties lightly which bound them to their fellows. The field of human interest was becoming more and more an internal one, the individual soul and its analysis calling for much attention from its anxious possessor. Herbert felt and helped to form this tendency. He allied himself with no cause, if we except his youthful attacks on Melville. He took few public responsibilities. To individuals he was strongly drawn, and he seems

to have formed warm friendships with able men. One gets the impression that he was incapable of anything selfish or petty, and that everything about him was instinctively noble. All felt him to be rare and exalted, and gave him instantly the reverence for which his nature called. But pride was in him, fastidiousness, and a dignity which little disposed him to accept the ways of others.

V

MIDWAY between Herbert's temperamental disposition and his intellectual acquirements lie his incisive humor and his anxious optimism. So detached and serious a nature is apt to lack humor. Milton lacked it; so did Wordsworth. Herbert is not without it, though his subject limits its amount and its kind. He at least knows *what mirth and musick mean*. He perceives how large a part merriment plays in human affairs, devotes to it considerable sections of THE CHURCH-PORCH and THE COUNTRY PARSON, and sagaciously warns us that *a pleasantness of disposition is of great use, men being willing to sell the interest and ingagement of their discourses for no price sooner then that of mirth; whither the nature of man, loving refreshment, gladly betakes it selfe*. The Country Parson is accordingly advised to interpose in his conversation *some short and honest refreshments which may make his other dis-*

courses more welcome and lesse tedious. Herbert holds that

*All things are bigge with jest. Nothing that's plain
But may be wittie if thou hast the vein.*

Pretty evenly distributed throughout his book runs his own peculiar form of humor, a form largely shaped by his love of epigram. There is in it an acid enjoyment of intellectual neatness, shrewd observation, an inclination to approach a subject from an unexpected quarter, and a playfulness too grave for outright laughter. Yet *THE QUIP* and *THE QUIDDITIE* almost dance. *PEACE* and *THE BAG* are gay. In single lines elsewhere he smiles at the *man of pleasure, a kinde of thing that's for itself too dear*; at him *whose clothes are fast, but his soul loose about him*; declares that *kneeling ne're spoil'd silk stocking*; is amused at the astronomer who *peers about the heavens and surveys as if he had designed to make a purchase there*; calls skeletons *the shells of fledge souls left behinde*; tells how at Doomsday *this member jogs the other, each one whispring, "Live you brother?"* and how in barren lives *we freeze on until the grave increase our cold*. Turns like these abound in Herbert. They connect themselves with his fondness for embroidered verse; and while far from full-blooded humor, they resemble it in intellectual pungency, freedom from conventionality, and grim sport. They indicate a

temperament which, if never exactly merry, could never have been morose, rigid, or over-reverential to fixed mental habits. In pure sarcasm Herbert indulges himself only in THE CHURCH MILITANT.

In asking whether Herbert is an optimist or a pessimist, we must remember that all religious writers incline to a sort of disparagement of human affairs. Certainly one who without this in mind should read DOTAGE, GIDDINESSE, HOME, MISERIE, MORTIFICATION, THE ROSE, THE SIZE, and the five poems on AFFLICTION, might well suppose their author a thorough pessimist. He would be confirmed in this belief by hearing elsewhere that *man is out of order hurl'd*, that *the condition of this world is frail*, that *here of all plants afflictions soonest grow*, that *thy Saviour sentenc'd joy, at least in lump*, that *terram et funus olent flores*, and that—as Herbert says in his PRAYER BEFORE SERMON—*we are darknesse and weaknesse and filthinesse and shame. Miserie and sinne fill our days*. Such expressions are familiar to every reader of Herbert, and they seem to assert that this world is rootedly evil, controlled rather by the Devil than by God. But in reality that is not Herbert's belief. This is God's world, a place of great order, intelligence, and beauty.

*All things that are, though they have sev'rall wayes,
Yet in their being joyn with one advise
To honour thee.*

Yet this divine order is confessedly hidden and much overlaid with afflictive circumstance. In disparaging things of time in view of those of eternity, the religious mind has large justification. We make, as Herbert says in *THE COUNTRY PARSON*, *a miserable comparison of the moment of griefs here with the weight of joys hereafter*. Everybody perceives that *things present shrink and die*. However cheerful we may be, we cannot fail to feel a pathetic poignancy in nature's rude transitoriness. *We are but flowers that glide*, and often must wish that *we past changing were*. Accordingly, in Herbert's case, as in that of Plato and many another world-worn soul, longing looks are frequently cast forward beyond mortality's bound.

*Who wants the place where God doth dwell
Partakes already half of hell.*

In moments of illness and disappointment, too, this longing may pass over into something like complaint. *After so foul a journey death is fair*. But such words draw no indictment against the universe. Fundamentally, there is no evil in its structure. Herbert's constant doctrine is that in its design and *originally*, each part of us and of our earth is rich in blessing. *At first we liv'd in pleasure*. In *MAN* and *PROVIDENCE* we see how marvellous is creation, which we alone, the crown of it, can understand and enjoy. God has *his glorious law embosomed in us*. The two *ANTIPHONS* bid us

continually to join with God and angels in glad rejoicing. Except sin, nothing can separate us from God; and not even that cuts us off from his love.

*For sure when Adam did not know
To sinne, or sinne to smother,
He might to heav'n from Paradise go
As from one room t' another.*

But precisely here is the trouble. The misery of the world is not grounded in the badness of its make or the harshness of its maker. Sin, and only sin, has brought it about. *Lord, thou createdst man in wealth and store, till foolishly he lost the same.* And though Herbert, with many others, is pleased to figure sin as typified and finished in Adam's wilfulness and finally curbed by Christ's self-sacrifice, he does not fail to recognize that in these two types are summed up processes always open to man for bliss or woe. Whenever we turn from wilful sin, something of *our sweet originall joy* is restored; and in *THE ELIXER, EMPLOYMENT*, and many other glad songs, we are shown the method of still finding delight and dignity everywhere. On the whole, then, while Herbert as a dualist, who separates spiritual and natural things pretty sharply, is sometimes inclined to blacken earthly conditions for the glory of the divine, he always knows that we are living in our Father's house, that we ourselves are that house, and that neither

it nor we are accursed. In spite of his quivering sense of sin, fundamentally Herbert is an optimist.

VI

HERBERT'S mind was a capacious and disciplined one, which had the amplest opportunities and drew from them all they were fitted to yield. Many contemporaries record their admiration of his wide reading and fully assimilated knowledge. According to his brother, "He was master of all learning, human and divine."

He has left a large body of Greek and Latin poems. He knew French, Italian, and Spanish. He was preëminently a student of divinity and poetry. With the law and the medicine of his age he was well acquainted. In natural science he had read and observed; he turned often and hopefully to astrology and alchemy; he was a connoisseur in manners, dress, and the refinements of life. In short, his intellectual curiosity was unceasing, broad, and minute. He followed persistently his own precept,

*To take all that is given ; whether wealth,
Or love, or language ; nothing comes amisse.*

Yet this comprehensiveness was ever attended by its needful counterpoise, mental independence. Richard Burton, the author of the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, is the stock example of a man lost in

learning. He cannot write a page without quoting the opinions of many writers. He must lean, or he cannot walk. Herbert stands on his own feet, and seldom quotes. Whatever he utters is his own, wherever he may have found it. Gathering knowledge on every side, he so incorporates it into his own mind that its original sources are not easily discovered. What is not fit for such incorporation he rejects, not with scorn, — with respect oftentimes, — yet with entire indifference. Although, as is shown in the next Essay, he was probably acquainted with most of the poetry of his time, his style gives no echo of any other poet except Donne, and of Donne he is no close imitator. The two strongest intellectual forces of that age were Lord Bacon and Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Herbert was in the closest relations with them both, yet neither contributed anything to his mental structure. Since his intimacy with these two men well illustrates his mode of limiting himself and accepting only such intellectual influences as fit his special requirements, I will trace his relations with them somewhat in detail.

Baron Edward Herbert of Cherbury was George Herbert's eldest brother. To us he is chiefly notable for his posthumously published *Autobiography*, one of the most amusing accounts in our language of a roving ambassador, lover, duellist, and man of fashion, who in his most improbable escapades never loses his courage, vanity, or hold

on his reader's interest. He was a poet, among other things, and in *An Ode upon a Question Moved Whether Love Should Continue Forever* employed, perhaps for the first time, the stanza of *In Memoriam*; using it, too, to express the same class of emotions for which Rossetti and Tennyson afterwards judged it fit. A volume of his verse has been well edited by J. Churton Collins. He wrote also a history of Henry VIII, and of the English expedition to the Isle of Rhé. But his serious work was in religious philosophy. His *De Veritate* may be said to have founded English Deism; for in it he attempts to identify natural and revealed religion, to show that the truths which we usually trace to the Bible are of wider origin, are indeed involved innately in the human constitution. Man is by nature a religious animal. Now although Lord Herbert's book was printed in 1624, and probably written some years earlier, although it related to the very subject which chiefly engaged his brother, that brother never mentions it. It encountered a storm of indignation which George Herbert could have only partially approved, so similar are certain of his own beliefs. But neither its spirit nor method was his; and he let it entirely alone, as if he had never heard its name. I find no reference to it in his writings, either in the way of acceptance or aversion.

Herbert first met Lord Bacon in the King's company at Royston in 1620. I have already mentioned how in his capacity as Orator he wrote

Bacon several official letters, acknowledging the receipt of his book and soliciting his aid for the University. The friendship of the two men seems to have ripened rapidly. Walton says that "Bacon put such a value on his judgment that he usually desir'd his approbation before he would expose any of his books to be printed." And Archbishop Tennison writes that after some unsuccessful attempts by others to translate Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* into Latin, the version was performed by "Mr. Herbert and some others who were esteemed masters in the Roman Eloquence." What this work of translation was, Mr. Spedding has been unable to discover. That it was considerable appears from Bacon's words, when in 1625 he dedicated to Herbert *A Translation of Certain Psalms into English Verse*:

"The pains that it pleased you to take about some of my writings I cannot forget; which did put me in mind to dedicate to you this poor exercise of my sickness. Besides, it being my manner for dedications to choose those that I hold most fit for the argument, I thought that in respect of divinity and poesy met—whereof the one is the matter, the other the stile of this little writing—I could not make better choice; so with signification of my love and acknowledgment, I ever rest

"Your affectionate Friend,

"FR. ST. ALBANS."

Notwithstanding this personal friendship, Herbert remained totally uninfluenced by Bacon. That he had read Bacon's books, and clearly understood his place and importance, is evident from the three Latin poems addressed to him, besides the lines of lament for his death; but Herbert went on his own way, a way which he knew to be different from that of the great innovator, and did not allow himself to be turned aside.

Herbert's failure to connect with Bacon and Herbert of Cherbury brings out an important intellectual trait which might easily be mistaken for a lack of ideas. Fundamental ideas he certainly does lack. He is not a philosopher. He never concerns himself to search for basal principles. Bacon and Lord Herbert are questioners of the existing order, reformatory minds, who cannot rest in the world that is given them. They desire to probe it for principles through whose aid it may be brought to clearer knowledge. Herbert's mind was of an opposite type, the mind of the artist rather than that of the philosopher: the artist, who takes whatever material is given and out of it contrives forms of beauty. The application or development of ideas is his work, not the discovery of them. Some men are always challenging what they hear with the question, "Is it true?" I cannot imagine such an inquiry entering the mind of Herbert. There are others, however, and they are often men of force, who searchingly ask, "What

does it mean?" And this is everywhere Herbert's question. He draws out of all that is around him its richest significance. Accepting the world as he finds it, he studies what it contains which fits his need, and then constructs, often out of forbidding material, a beautiful intellectual lodging.

VII

THESE intellectual peculiarities must be borne in mind on coming to estimate Herbert's attitude toward divinity and the Church. In both he accepts all that is offered him; but he keeps his independence, his practical rationality, and is indisposed to fundamental questions. For philosophic theology he has neither aptitude nor interest. About the ultimate natures of God or man he does not concern himself. A few simple precepts, he tells us in *DIVINITIE*, are all the doctrines necessary for our guidance. There is usually a philistine tone in Herbert when fundamental problems press. But in harmonizing what is traditional with present needs and in making dead matter live, he is at his best, and often positively creative. The current religious notions of his time are accordingly all adopted without criticism; but all are rendered rational, humane, exquisitely fitted to men's requirements, and even to their delight and playfulness. Hell, for example, is accepted; but nothing is said of its torments. It means banishment

from God, perpetuity of evil. The name Satan does not occur in his poetry. The Devil is mentioned once, when we are told that *he hath some good in him, all agree*. Devils appear three or four times, most incidentally, except in the little poem SINNE, which is written to show how *devils are our sinnes in perspective*. Heaven is no place of idle reward, but the opportunity to know and serve Him who is now obscurely dear. Christ has made atonement for us; how, is not stated. No forensic explanation is allowed, but love alone triumphs in his death. Sin is self-assertion and alienation from God; salvation, union with Him and affectionate adoption of righteousness. The Trinity is adored; it renders God accessible on so many sides. And all through these accepted and transformed theologic notions runs a play of fancy, intimacy, passion, with subtle intellectual diversifications and artistic adjustments, until the total effect is not that of a mind bound by a traditional system, but of one freely finding its own singularly real and triumphant entrance into a divine order.

Just so he is devoted to his Church, and has rightly become one of its saints. Oley and Walton, with most of his subsequent biographers, have put him forward to exalt the glories of episcopacy and the abominations of dissent. And well would he be pleased to be employed in such a service; for he assailed the enemies of his Church in his youth, sang her ordinances throughout his life, elaborately

ministered them during his closing years, and left a hand-book explaining how they might be exercised with the utmost efficiency. Her doctrine and discipline he never questioned. It is no wonder, then, that he has usually been classed as an extreme High Churchman ; and that those who are episcopally-minded, but have only a slight acquaintance with his writings, accept him as the convincing prophet of their cause. Coleridge thought that "THE TEMPLE will always be read with fullest appreciation by those who share the poet's devotion to the Dear Mother whose praises he has undertaken to celebrate."

Yet enthusiastic students of Herbert are confined to no one communion. The majority of those I have happened to meet have been drawn from his old enemies, the Puritans and Presbyterians. Many Unitarian devotees I have known too, and several Agnostics. Catholics are more apt to find him distasteful. Herbert's extreme insistence on individual responsibility, and his inclination to set the soul in solitary communication with God, are rather Puritan than "Churchly." He was indeed a loyal follower of the English Church, but the grounds of his allegiance bring him within the sympathy of the Church Universal. In his day, and still more in ours, the English Church has found support among men of two contrasted types, — the obedient souls, who love subjection to authority, and are only at ease under the shelter of a com-

manded institution; and the free beings who find other sects narrow, and so turn to a historic ritual as the naturally selected and fit means by which the total spirit of man may piously express itself. Herbert, when closely questioned, declares himself one of the latter sort.

Bancroft, Laud, and other ecclesiastical leaders of Herbert's time held that a fixed form of both Church and State had been divinely established. Christ, it was believed, had in mind a single system of organization, doctrine, and ritual, to be set up in the world forever. This He intrusted to his Apostles. The Roman Church, by virtue of St. Peter's headship, claimed to be in possession of this system. The Anglican leaders claimed that it was theirs. The question was not primarily as to the truth of the doctrines held, or the fitness of the one Church or the other to minister best to spiritual life; it was one of historic fact: which Church did Christ have in mind? And this belief that Christ had authorized a particular ecclesiastical system found a readier acceptance because a similar belief in regard to the State was already in possession of men's minds. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, those who were disposed to regard institutions not so much as a means but as ends in themselves held unquestioningly to the twin beliefs of divine right in Church and State.

Another view, however, of the position of the Church of England after the Reformation was

that episcopacy was desirable on account of its reasonableness, its decency, its power of ministering to men's wants. Christ announced the principles which underlie every Church rather than the complete model of some particular one. This theory was set forth in its clearest and most profound form by Richard Hooker (1554-1600) in his *Ecclesiastical Polity*. Throughout his second and third Books Hooker maintains that law, whether in nature, in the mind and heart of man, or in the constitution of society, is as much a revelation of God as is the Bible. That which discerns and applies this widely revealed and revealing law is reason. Accordingly "the necessity of Polity and Regiment in all Churches may be held without holding any one certain form to be necessary in them all." As a matter of history, episcopacy has descended from the apostles, but it is not on that account to be considered an indispensable necessity of Church life. That form of government and ritual which bears within itself the marks of reasonableness, order, and edification is stamped thereby as ordained by Christ as truly as if there had been an express command of his for it. "Inasmuch as law doth stand upon reason, to allege reason serveth as well as to cite Scripture. . . . For men to be tied and led by authority as if it were a kind of captivity of the judgment, and though there be reason to the contrary not to listen unto it but to follow like beasts the first in the herd, they know

not nor care not whither, this were brutish. That authority of men should prevail with men either against or above reason is no part of our belief."

The opposing views here stated in regard to the divine origin of the Church continue to distinguish its loyal adherents in our day. We know the two parties as High Churchmen and Broad Churchmen. The one hold the Church to be divine because it embodies a command of Christ; the other, because of its adaptation to human needs. Through nearly all communions there runs a similar line of cleavage. The authoritative mind and the rationalizing mind are probably inherent in humanity itself. To which type did Herbert belong?

Judged by his devotion to the Church of England, by his hostility to her foes, and by his insistence on elaborate ritual, Herbert is a High Churchman; but there is no indication that he held the tenet distinctive of High Churchmanship, the belief that his ecclesiastical system had been designed and established by Christ. He never defends his position by maintaining for it an injunction of Christ or an Apostolic model. On the contrary, he employs tests much more verifiable.

*Give to thy Mother what thou wouldst allow
To ev'ry Corporation.*

In Chapter XIII of *THE COUNTRY PARSON*, where he explains how the church and altar should be arranged, he says that all this is done not *as out*

*of necessity, or as putting a holiness in the things, but as desiring to keep the middle way between superstition and slovenliness, and as following the Apostle's two great and admirable Rules in things of this nature: The first whereof is, "Let all things be done decently and in order;" the second, "Let all things be done to edification." For these two rules . . . excellently score out the way, and fully and exactly contain, even in externall and indifferent things, what course is to be taken. To the same effect he speaks in his poem on THE BRITISH CHURCH, where he finds the justification of that Church to lie in the fact that she is a mean between the Romish and the Genevan,—neither painted like the former nor undrest like the latter. He never asserts that the Churches he opposes have departed from a primitive pattern, or that his own conforms to it. The decadence of the Romish Church, which he traces with much detail in THE CHURCH MILITANT, is found in its lapses into moral evil, and not in any alteration of prescribed usage. Marriage, he urges in THE CHURCH-PORCH (l. 19), is holy because man would have been obliged to institute it himself if God had not. Lent is commended because fasting is wholesome, beautiful to practise in company with others, in imitation of Christ, and as a part of a holy plan for the year. Nor can *authoritie*, which should increase the obligation in us, make it lesse. In baptism his Country Parson willingly*

and cheerfully crosseth the child, and thinketh the Ceremony not onely innocent but reverend. In matters so uncertain as praying to the Saints, we should consider that *all worship is prerogative, and not engage in it where His pleasure no injunction layes.* He celebrated the Communion infrequently; *if not duly once a month, yet at least five or six times in the year* (THE COUNTRY PARSON, XXII). He, Ferrar, and Donne all used on occasion in their services prayers written by themselves, side by side with those taken from the Prayer Book.

On the whole, then, it is evident — as Walton alleges in his long explanation of Herbert's use of ritual — that he joyously accepted his Church's order through a conviction of its beauty and serviceability, and not because of its antiquity or its externally authoritative character. He regarded it as a means, not an end; a tool to be used, not a legal ordinance to be obeyed. He had no hesitation in shaping it this way or that, as occasion seemed to demand. That many of its parts were ancient might endear them, but was not the ground of their acceptance. A practice which could claim an express command of Christ, he welcomed for that reason. Practices not having such command, and which seemed not favorable to edification, he refused. Everywhere a lover of beauty and of subtle suggestion, he valued an elaborate ritual. *Nothing could seem too rich to*

clothe the sunne. An extreme Ritualist he might well be called; only that Ritualists rarely, like Herbert, base their ritual on grounds of beauty and serviceability. With them, as with High Churchmen, the moving principle is generally conformity to an ancient command. For Herbert the appeal was to an internal need.

VIII

THIS paper presents no picture of Herbert. We do not see him here as he walked among men. The many features to which I have separately called attention are not drawn together naturally into a whole. As was said at the beginning, Herbert is interesting through uniting in himself traits which are usually found opposed. More than in most men *his words and works and fashion too are all of a piece.* By psychologically detaching his conditions of body, temperament, intellect, and religion, I falsify him. To make him live, these must be put together again, and so all be brought into that ordered beauty which Herbert everywhere prized. But this singleness of the harmonized Herbert can be best read in his poems.



A page of the Bodleian Manuscript, showing the handwriting of a copyist. See Vol. I, p. 176.

The Church

LOVE.

Love had mee welcome, yet my soule drew back
 Guilty of dust & sin.
 But quick eyd Love observing mee grow slack
 From my first entrance in,
 Drew neerer to mee sweetly questioning,
 If I had any thing.

A question I answered, what should I be there.
 Love said, you shall be Se.
 If I'm kind, ungratefull. As my Deere
 I cannot looke on & see.
 Love took me hand, & smiling did reply,
 Who made these eyes but I.

Trueth Lord, but I have marr'd & dim: Let my Shame
 Go, where it does deserve.
 And know you not says Love, who bore y^e blame.
 My Deere, & then I will seeue.
 You must sitt downe says Love, & eat my meat
 So I did sitt & eat. -

Finis.

III

THE TYPE OF RELIGIOUS POETRY

THE TYPE OF RELIGIOUS POETRY

TO both the matter and the manner of English poetry George Herbert made notable contributions. He devised the religious love-lyric, and he introduced structure into the short poem. These are his two substantial claims to originality. To state, illustrate, and qualify them will be the object of this and the following Essay.

I

OF course there was religious verse in England before Herbert's time. To see how considerable it was, and how he modified it, I will roughly classify what had been written under the four headings of Vision, Meditation, Paraphrase, and Hymn. In the poetry of Vision the poet stands above his world, and is concerned rather with divine transactions than with human. Cynewulf in Saxon times looked into the wonders of the Advent, Ascension, and Doomsday. The author of *Piers the Plowman*, with visions of the Kingdom of Heaven before his eyes, condemned the institutions of rural England. Spenser imagined a fairy realm where chivalry, holiness, and unearthly beauty dominate all forms of evil. Giles Fletcher

in Keats-like verse pictured the four Victories achieved by Christ. The young Milton, just before Herbert took orders, celebrated the Nativity, Circumcision, and Passion. And a few years after Herbert's death Sandys translated into English verse Grotius' Drama of Christ's Passion. In all these cases the writers are not primarily interested in their relations to God, but in his to the world; and these relations they behold dramatically embodied in certain divine occurrences. In such dramatic Visions we may perceive a kind of survival of the early Miracle Play.

But the imaginative point of view belongs to exceptional men. Much commoner, especially in Herbert's early life, was religious Meditation. Spenser had practised it with his accustomed splendor in his two Hymns in Honour of Divine Love and Beauty; so had Constable in his Spiritual Sonnets to the Honour of God and his Saints, and Drayton in his Harmonies of the Church. Many of Sidney's sonnets, of Shakespeare's, are reveries on the nature of the soul, its immortality, and its relation to its Maker. Sir John Davies studies these questions more abstractly in his *Nosce Teipsum*, as does Phineas Fletcher in *The Purple Island*. Lord Herbert looks at them romantically in his Tennysonian Ode, inquiring *Whether Love Should Continue Forever*. Drummond gravely examines them in his *Flowers of Sion*. Fulke Greville draws up in verse a *Treatise*

of Religion. Nicholas Breton has similar discussions of sacred themes. Many of Daniel's and of Donne's Epistles and Elegies are weighty with a moral wisdom not to be distinguished from religion; while Donne's *Anatomy of the World*, *Progress of the Soul*, and *Divine Poems* would, if they were not so intellectual, be genuinely devout. Quarles' *Divine Fancies* are of the same character. Raleigh and Wotton, too, and many other poets less famous than they, have single meditations of sweet seriousness and depth on God, man, death, and duty. Yet religious verse of this type everywhere bears the same mark. It studies a problem and tries to reach a general truth. Its writers do not content themselves with recording their own emotions. Their poetry, therefore, lacks the individual note and is not lyric. If the preceding group of religious verse may be thought of as following the *Miracle Play*, this continues the traditions of the old *Morality*.

Yet in religion there is more than sacred scenes and wise Meditation. There is worship, the open profession by God's children of their exultation in Him and their need of his continual care. Worship, however, especially in the time preceding Herbert, was a collective affair, in which the holy aspirations of the individual were merged in those of his fellows and went forth in company along already consecrated paths. For such national worship and such sanctified associations nothing could be a

more fitting expression than the Holy Scriptures. The Bible was the Magna Charta of the Reformation. To love it was to show one's hostility to Popery. In it all truth was contained. If one needed poetry, then, or sacred song, where could one obtain it better than in this its original source? For a time it seemed almost profane to look elsewhere. The favorite form of religious utterance was the versified Paraphrase of some portion of the Bible. Naturally the Psalms were the part most commonly chosen. The collection of Paraphrases of the Psalms which goes by the name of Sternhold and Hopkins was drawn up in 1562, and was soon adopted into the use of the English churches. But almost every prominent poet attempted a few Psalms. To translate them became a literary fashion. Wyatt and Surrey engaged in it, as later did Sidney and his sister, Spenser, Sylvester, Davison, Wither, Phineas Fletcher, King James, Lord Bacon, Milton, Sandys, and even Carew. But the disposition to paraphrase the Bible did not confine itself to the Psalms. Surrey put Ecclesiastes into verse; Sylvester, Job; Quarles versified Job, Samson, Esther, and the Song of Solomon. Both he and Donne tried to make poetry out of the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Drayton told the stories of Noah, Moses, and David. Indeed, the strange fashion lasted down to the time of Cowley, who in 1656 published four Books of the Troubles of King David, and translated one of them back into Latin.

Paradise Lost itself may be regarded as but the full, gorgeous, and belated consummation of what Milton's predecessors in Paraphrase and Vision had already attempted.

The Hymn, that form of religious aspiration most natural to us, developed slowly in the England of Elizabeth and James, and gained only a partial acceptance during the reign of Charles. The Catholic Church had always had its Latin hymns. Many of these were translated by Luther and the German reformers, and freely used in their churches. Luther's own hymns were much prized. The English Prayer Book is largely a translation of the Roman Breviary, and the Breviary contains many hymns; but the makers of the Prayer Book left the hymns untranslated. Why so low an estimate was set on hymns in England is not altogether clear, but for some reason English Protestants contented themselves for the most part with versions of the Psalms. Perhaps they took example from Geneva. Clement Marot in 1544 translated fifty Psalms into French, and these were completed in 1562 by Beza and adopted into the service of the Reformed Swiss and French churches. Genevan influences, being strong in George Herbert's England, may have coöperated with other causes to hold back the promising movement toward giving the English people their own religious songs. For such a movement did start. Coverdale in 1540 published some Spiritual

Songs in company with thirteen Goostly Psalms, mostly translated from German originals. The collection of Sternhold and Hopkins contained a group of hymns in addition to its translated Psalms, while a more marked advance in this direction was made by Wedderburn's widely used Book of Psalms and Spiritual Songs, printed in Scotland in 1560. This had three parts: the first consisting of Psalms, the second of hymns, and the third of popular secular songs to which a religious meaning had been attached. Half a dozen Songs of Sadness and Piety were in William Byrd's Book of Songs, 1588. But these admirable beginnings, English and Scotch, were only slenderly followed up. Such songs were apparently too individual, and could not compete with the broad and universal Psalms. As Puritanism advanced, the Bible tended to overshadow all other inspiration. It was not until 1623 that George Wither in his Hymns and Songs of the Church composed the first hymn-book that ever appeared in England, and obtained permission to have it used in churches. Eighteen years later he published a second and much larger volume, under the title of England's Hallelujah, but like its predecessor it met with much opposition. Hymns were not a natural form of devotion in the first half of the seventeenth century, and few were even in existence previously to Wither's book. Wither complains in his Scholar's Purgatory (1624) that

“for divers ages together there have been but so many hymns composed and published as make not above two sheets and a half of paper.”

II

SUCH, then, was the condition of English sacred poetry when Herbert began to write. To each of its four varieties he made good contributions. In *THE SACRIFICE* and *THE BAG* he has visions of divine events. The massive reflections of *THE CHURCH-PORCH*, *THE CHURCH MILITANT*, and many of the poems contained in my third, fifth, and eighth Groups give him high rank among the meditative religious poets. He also translated half a dozen Psalms; and possibly the two *ANTIPHONS*, one of the poems entitled *PRAISE*, and the songs which are appended to *EASTER*, *THE HOLY COMMUNION*, and *AN OFFERING*, may pass for hymns. I do not reckon *VERTUE* and *THE ELIXER*; for though these bear his name in our hymn-books, their popular form is not due to him, but to John Wesley.

Yet in spite of the worth of Herbert's work in all these four accredited varieties, and his real eminence in the second, his distinctive merit must be sought elsewhere. For he originated a new species of sacred verse, the religious lyric, a species for which the English world was waiting, which it welcomed with enthusiasm, and which at once

became so firmly established that it is now difficult to conceive that it did not always exist. In reality, though cases of something similar may be discovered in earlier poetry, it was Herbert who thought it out, studied its aesthetic possibilities, and created the type for future generations. Wherein, then, does this fifth type of Herbert's differ from the preceding four? In this: The religious lyric is a cry of the individual heart to God. Standing face to face with Him, its writer describes no event, explores no general problem, leans on no authoritative book. He searches his own soul, and utters the love, the timidity, the joy, the vacillations, the remorse, the anxieties, he finds there. That is not done in the hymn. Though its writer often speaks in the first person, he gives voice to collective feeling. He thinks of himself as representative, and selects from that which he finds in his heart only what will identify him with others. On God and himself his attention is not exclusively fixed. Always in the lyric it is thus fixed. When Burns sings of Mary Morison, he has no audience in mind, nor could his words be adopted by any company. Just so the religious lyric is a supreme love-song, involving two persons and two only, — the individual soul as the lover and its divine and incomparable Love. We hear the voice of the former appealing in introspective monologue to the distant and exalted dear one. "Divinest love lies in this book," says

Crashaw in writing of Herbert's *TEMPLE*; and he justly marks its distinctive feature.

A certain preparation for Herbert's work was already laid in the poetry of Robert Southwell. This heroic young Englishman was born in high station in 1561, became a Jesuit priest, and in 1592 was arrested by Elizabeth on account of his religion. After three years of imprisonment in the Tower, where he was thirteen times subjected to torture, he was executed in February, 1595. In the same year were printed two volumes of his verse. These include the long *St. Peter's Complaint* and about fifty short poems, many of them written during his imprisonment. Perhaps the best known is the Christmas song of *The Burning Babe*. All are vivid, sincere, and accomplished, and all without exception deal with religious themes. Southwell is accordingly our earliest religious poet, the only one before Herbert who confined himself to that single field. Possibly Herbert derived from him the idea of taking religion for his province. Southwell's book was popular in Herbert's boyhood; and when Herbert as a young man announces to his mother his resolve to dedicate his poetic powers to God's service, he uses language strikingly similar to that in Southwell's *Epistle of The Authour to the Reader*. Herbert's long early poem too, *THE CHURCH-PORCH*, is in the metre of *St. Peter's Complaint*. Yet the temper of the two men is unlike and their aims diver-

gent. In style Southwell connects with Spenser, Herbert with Donne. Southwell, too, like Crashaw afterward, lives in a beautiful Romish world, where the saints claim more attention than his own salvation. Fortitude is his principal theme, and reflections on the emptiness of the world. His is a stout heart. It does not seek intimate communings with its Master, and is seldom alone with God. The lyric yearning of the fearful lover is not his; though in such poems as *Content* and *Rich, Sin's Heavy Load*, and *Lewd Love is Loss*, he nearly approaches the meditative and sententious power of Herbert. That religious love-song, however, in which Herbert traces all the waywardness of his affection for the mighty object of his love, exhibiting the same fervency of passion which enters into the human relation, does not occur in Southwell.

Nearer to Herbert is Thomas Campion, who about 1613 published twenty *Divine and Moral Songs*. Campion is an exquisite experimenter, skilful in discovering every sweet subtlety which song admits. Both in the personal quality of his religious verse and in its beauty of structure, he may fairly be called a predecessor of Herbert. But he, too, is under Spenserian influence. His religious poems are pure songs, written — like most of his verse — with reference to a musical setting. They lack, therefore, that introspective passion which fills Herbert's throbbing stanzas. Herbert could have obtained little direct aid from them. He is

more likely to have been indebted to Donne's few hymns and to his Holy Sonnets. In these there is Herbert's own deep communing with God. But instances of this occur all the way down the long line of English poetry. The Early English Text Society has published several volumes of religious verse which, while usually of the types I have named Vision and Meditation, show occasional instances of personal appeal. Religious poetry of the personal life had never been uncommon among continental Catholics, the mystics, and the German Reformers, though it had not yet found full voice in England. In no strict sense, then, can Herbert be said to have created it, for it is grounded in one of the most constant cravings of human nature. Yet the true discoverer is not he who first perceives a thing, but he who discerns its importance and its place in human life. And this is what Herbert did. He is the first in England to bring this universal craving to adequate utterance. He rediscovered it, enriched it with his own ingenuity, precision, and candor, and established it as a theme for English poetry, freed from the mystic and sensuous morbidity which has often disfigured it in other literatures.

III

CERTAIN general tendencies of Herbert's time combined with peculiarities of his own nature to bring about this new poetry. Individualism was abroad, disturbing "the unity and married calm of states," and sending its subtle influence into every department of English life. The rise of Puritanism was but one of its manifestations. Everywhere the Renaissance movement pressed toward a return to nature and an assertion of the rights of the individual. At its rise these tendencies were partially concealed. Its first fruits were delivery from oppressive seriousness, a general emancipation of human powers, the enrichment of daily life, beauty, splendor, scholarship, a quickened and incisive intelligence. But as it advanced, the Renaissance opened doors to all kinds of self-assertion. Each person, each desire, each opinion, became clamorous and set up for itself, regardless of all else. In its remoteness England was tardy in feeling these disintegrating influences. The splendor, too, of the Renaissance was somewhat dimmed in Italy and France before it shone on the age of Elizabeth. There it found a society exceptionally consolidated under a forceful Queen. Foreign dangers welded the nation together. It is doubtful if at any other period of its history has the English people believed, acted, enjoyed, and aspired so nearly like a single person

as during the first three quarters of the age of Elizabeth. She, her great ministers, and the historical plays of Shakespeare set forth its ideals of orderly government. Spenser's poem consummated its ideals of orderly beauty, as did Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity those of an orderly church. Men in those days marched together. Dissenters, either of a religious, political, or artistic sort, were few and despised.

But change was impending. A second period of the Renaissance began, a period of introspection, where each man was prone to insist on the importance of whatever was his own. At the coming of the Stuarts this great change was prepared, and was steadily fostered by their inability to comprehend it. In science, Bacon had already questioned established authority and sent men to nature to observe for themselves. In government, the king's prerogative was speedily questioned, and Parliaments became so rebellious that they were often dismissed. A revolution in poetic taste was under way. Spenser's lulling rhythms and bloodless heroes were being displaced by the jolting and passionate realism of Donne.

The changes wrought in religion were of a deeper and more varied kind. Forms and ceremonies, the product of a collective religious consciousness, gradually became objects of suspicion. Personal religion, the sense of individual responsibility to God, was regarded as the one thing needful. Al-

ready the setting up of a national church and the rejection of a Catholic or world-church had admitted the principle of individual judgment, and now the further progress of this principle could not be stayed. If a single nation might seek what was best for itself, regardless of the Papacy, why might not also a single body of Christians, regardless of the nation, — or even an individual soul, regardless of its fellows? Our souls, the Puritans held, are our own. No man can save his brother. Each stands single before his Maker, answerable to Him alone. The social sense, it may be said, had decayed as an instinct, and had not yet been rationally reconstructed. It needed to decay, if a fresh and varied religious experience was to invigorate English life. The call to individualism was the most sacred summons of the age. All sections of the community heard it. Puritanism merely accepted it with peculiar heartiness and reverence. In the High Church party ideas substantially similar were at work. By them, too, asceticism and "freedom from the world" were often regarded as the path of piety. What a sign of the times is the conduct of Herbert's friend, Nicholas Ferrar, who would cut all ties, stand naked before God, and so seek holiness! Ferrar was a religious genius, able to discern the highest ideals of his age, and courageous enough to carry them out. But how widely and in what unlike forms these individualistic ideas pervaded the community

may be seen in three other powerful men, all born before Herbert died, — Thomas Hobbes, George Fox, and John Bunyan. The best and the worst tendencies of that age demanded that each man should seek God for himself, unhampered by his neighbor.

And just as the seeker after God is at this time conceived as a detached individual, so is the object of the search, — God himself. Notions of the divine immanence do not belong to this age. God is not a spiritual principle, the power that makes for righteousness, universal reason, collective natural force. Such ideas come later, in the train of that Deistic movement of which Herbert's brother was the precursor. God is an independent person, exactly like ourselves, having foresight, skill, love and hatred, grief, self-sacrifice, and a power of action a good deal limited by the kind of world and people among whom He works. From Him Jesus Christ is indistinguishable. With Him one may talk as with a friend; and though no answering sound comes back, the Bible — every portion of which is his living word — reports his instructions, while the conditions of mind and heart in which we find ourselves after communion with Him disclose his influence and indicate his will. In all this religious realism there is a vitality and precision, a permission to take God with us into daily affairs, a banishment of loneliness, and a refreshment of courage impossible to those who

accept the broader but vaguer notions fashionable in our day. Without attempting to assess the completeness or truth of the opposing conceptions, we must see that the earlier has immense advantages for artistic purposes. This concrete, vivid thought of God sets the religious imagination free and makes it creative in poetry as nothing else can. All art is personal and anthropomorphic.

IV

HERBERT was a true child of this eager, individualistic, realistic age. In its full tide he lived. An exceptionally wide acquaintance with its leaders of philosophy, poetry, and the Church brought his impressionable nature to accept its ideals as matters of course. He has not the hardy and spacious nature that asks fundamental questions. His mind is receptive, even if anticipatory. Too proud and independent for an imitator, and ever disposed to build his own pathway, he still employs in that building only the material he finds at hand. Rarely does he desire more. Small modifications, readjustments, the application of refinement and elevation where coarseness had been before, — these rather than revolutionary measures are what he adds to the intellectual stock of his age. He is no Wordsworth, Keats, or Browning; he is related to his time rather as an early Gray or Arnold, as one who voices with exquisite

art what those around him already feel. But if the ideals of his time shaped him, he in turn shaped them. Through his responsive heart and dexterous fingers they attained a precision, beauty, and compelling power which bore them far past the limits of that age.

In his first years at Cambridge Herbert had thought of religion as primarily an affair of ritual and ordinance. This is painfully evident in some Latin epigrams written at this time in reply to Andrew Melville. This learned and witty Scotchman, in some verses entitled *Anti-Tami-Cami-Categoria*, had attacked certain features of the English Church as meaningless and injurious to piety. Herbert replies, but shows no devotional spirit in his smart and scurrilous lines. He does not write as a defender of God, of his own soul, or of holy agencies personally found dear. He defends an established and external institution, whose usages must all alike be exempt from criticism. But such blind partisanship was brief. As has been shown in my preceding Essay, the love of Anglicanism which fills Herbert's later poems and his *COUNTRY PARSON* is of a different type. It springs from a belief in the aid his Church can afford to individual holiness, collective convenience, and permanent beauty. That Church he thinks of as a means and not an end; and the end is everywhere communion of the individual soul with God.

Strangely enough, it was during the Melville controversy and while defending ecclesiasticism that Herbert heard and accepted his deeper call to vindicate personal religion as a poetic theme. On New Year's Day, 1610, at the age of seventeen, he sent his mother the two momentous sonnets which form the opening of my second Group. They and their accompanying letter announce a literary and religious programme which mark an epoch in the life of Herbert and in the development of English poetry. *In these Sonnets*, Walton reports him as saying, *I declare my resolution to be that my poor Abilities in Poetry shall be all and ever consecrated to God's glory*. Herbert, thus early discovering himself to be a poet, here fixes the field most suitable to his genius. He will give himself exclusively to religious verse, something never before attempted in England except by Southwell. He fixes a special aim, too. He will *reprove the vanity of those many Love-poems that are daily writ and consecrated to Venus*. Though love is the proper theme of poetry, why should it be studied in its pettiest form as the half-physical tie between men and women, and not where it shows its full force, volume, and variety when God and man are drawn together? *Cannot thy love heighten a spirit to sound out thy praise as well as any she?* These are accordingly his resolves: he will become a life-long poet; an exclusively religious poet; and while studying love, as do secular poets, — *that fire which*

by God's power and might each breast does feel, — he will present it freed from those sexual limits and artificialities in which it is usually set.

V

TO these resolves Herbert remained, I believe, substantially true. Edmund Gosse and some others have asserted that he wrote secular verse also, destroying it when he took orders. For evidence they urge that it is improbable that a courtly poet should have written nothing in the current styles, that the religious verse left by Herbert is extremely small in amount, while it shows an excellence hardly possible without long practice. As this is a point crucial for the understanding of Herbert, I will briefly sum up the strong opposing evidence.

Herbert's secular verse is purely supposititious. Nobody ever saw it and mentioned it, though in certain quarters it would have been mentioned had it existed. Oley and Walton, his early biographers, know nothing of it. They give us to understand that he wrote only on religion. In none of his letters is it alluded to, nor in his poems, — full though these latter are of regrets for youthful follies. On the other hand, we know that in pursuance of his early purpose he set himself at Cambridge to create a poetry of divine love. On this he was still engaged at Bemerton. In what period of his life,

then, do his secular poems fall? Surely not in the years when he was antagonizing secular poetry. But what others remain? Already, eight years before Herbert's death, Bacon, dedicating to him some Psalms, knows of his great reputation for "divinity and poesy met." And twenty years after his death, Henry Vaughan looks back on the loose love-poetry of the previous half century and counts it Herbert's glory to have opposed it. In the preface of *Silex Scintillans* he writes: "The first that with any effectual success attempted a diversion of this foul and overflowing stream was the blessed man, Mr. George Herbert, whose holy life and verse gained many pious converts, of whom I am the least."

Nor need we be disturbed over the small quantity of sacred verse included in *THE TEMPLE*. Herbert may have written much more. In the early manuscript of his verse preserved in the Williams Library are six poems which were not included in Ferrar's edition. How many others were similarly rejected we do not know. Differences of style among those preserved indicate that his writing extended over many years. In my Preface to *THE CHURCH-PORCH* I have given reasons for supposing that this poem was begun early and continued at different periods of his life. The many changes in the Williams Manuscript show how largely he revised such poems as he intended to retain. In order, then, to give his pen long and sufficient prac-

tice, we have no need to invent secular poetry. And as regards the choice character of what was finally published, it may be said that fineness rather than fecundity was ever Herbert's characteristic. Till he settled at Bemerton he wrote no English prose.

In view, then, of the fact that there is no evidence in behalf of secular poetry by Herbert, while there are strong probabilities against it, we may fairly accept Herbert's declared purpose as final, and believe that he dedicated all his verse to the exposition of divine love, experienced in the communion of each individual heart with God, and also announced as a world-force in the coming of Christ.

VI

GOOD examples of the latter sort of love-lyric, where God solicits us, are THE PULLEY, MISERIE, SION, DECAY, THE AGONIE, the second PRAYER, the second LOVE. In these the progress of God's love is traced, advancing majestically through humiliation and suffering to rescue little, fallen, headlong, runaway man. Yet here, too, while love is examined on its divine side, its work is not — as in the Visions previously considered — viewed pictorially and as a purely celestial affair. God is the lover of man, and his slighted appeal to the individual soul is the subject of the song. These poems are accordingly veritable lyrics. They deal with the inner life — with moods, affections,

solicitations — not with heavenly transactions, dramatic scenes, objective situations. Indeed, facts and outward events have no place in Herbert's poetry. Only once, in the ninth section of his Latin *PARENTALIA*, does he mention events of the day. He might well say with Browning, whom in many respects he strongly resembles, "My stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul; little else is worth study."

But it is when Herbert turns to man's side of the great alliance, to man's wavering yet inevitable love of God, that he is most truly himself. For here he can be frankly psychological, and mental analysis is really his whole stock in trade. Yet what passion and tenderness does he contrive to weave into his subtle introspections! Hardly do the impetuous love-songs of Shelley yearn and sob more profoundly than these tangled, allusive, self-conscious, and over-intellectual verses of him who first in English poetry spoke face to face with God. The particular poems I have in mind are the following: the *AFFLICTIONS*, *THE CALL*, *CLASPING OF HANDS*, *THE COLLAR*, *DENIAL*, *THE ELIXER*, *THE FLOWER*, *THE GLANCE*, *THE GLIMPSE*, *GRATEFULNESSE*, *LONGING*, *THE METHOD*, *THE ODOUR*, *THE PEARL*, *THE SEARCH*, *SUBMISSION*, *THE TEMPER*, *UNKINDNESSE*, *A WREATH*. But where shall one stop? To specify what belongs under this heading would be to enumerate a third of all Herbert has written. Perhaps those already

named are enough to explain the mighty impact on his generation of the Herbertian conception of religious verse as personal aspiration. Out of his one hundred and sixty-nine poems only twenty-three do not employ the first person ; and half a dozen of these are addresses in the second person to his own soul, while several others are dramatic. Practically all his poetry is poetry of the personal life. "He speaks of God like a man that really believeth in God," says Richard Baxter of Herbert. His matter is individual experience, reported in all the variety of mood and shifting fancy which everywhere characterizes veritable experience. In it he will exhibit the profundities of love and thus confute the love-poets.

And who are these love-poets ? Of course the whole airy company of Elizabethan songsters, including Donne with his early wild lyrics of love. But it may be conjectured that in his *TWO SONNETS* Herbert has especially in mind those men who have left behind them their long sonnet sequences. This is the more likely because most of these sonneteers came into close connection with him through the Pembrokes of Wilton. Sidney, who wrote the *Stella* series, was the uncle of the Earl of Pembroke. Spenser was the friend of Sidney, edited his sonnets, and four years after, in 1595, published his own series of *Amoretti*. Daniel, who brought out his *Sonnets to Delia* in 1592, had for his patroness the Countess of Pembroke. So had

Constable, who printed his Sonnets to Diana in 1592, and prefaced Sidney's Apology for Poetry in 1595. Drayton's series to Idea appeared in 1594, their author the only one not closely connected with the Herbert and Pembroke circle. In the very year in which Herbert declared his resolve to his mother, Shakespeare's Sonnets were published and dedicated to Mr. W. H., mysterious initials often supposed — though in my judgment erroneously — to be those of William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, to whom the first folio of Shakespeare's plays is dedicated. With the leaders, therefore, of that group of men who domesticated in England the love-sonnet of Petrarch, Herbert was brought into relation, and he probably had them in mind when he resolved to initiate a movement in opposition to the artificial love-poetry of his day.

For these men were artificial, and much disposed to "doleful sonnets made to their mistress' eyebrow." They undertook the complete anatomy of love. No phase of the passion was too trivial to receive their detailed attention, though the emotional situation itself often became so paramount as somewhat to hide the features of her who was supposed to inspire it. In fact, her existence became comparatively unimportant. Whether there ever was a heroine or hero of a single one among the several sonnet sequences just named has been strongly doubted. The elder Giles Fletcher, printing in 1593 his sonnets to Licia, says: "This kind

of poetry wherein I write I did it only to try my humour." The writers of such sonnets were engaged in exploiting an ideal situation and in recording what was demanded by it. Nothing of the sort may ever have occurred in their own experience. Very largely they borrowed their situations and even their phrases from French and Italian sonneteers. A stock of poetic motives had been accumulated among the disciples of Petrarch from which each poet now helped himself at will. Sighing was thus made easy. Mr. Sidney Lee computes that between 1591 and 1597 more than two thousand sonnets were printed in England and nearly as many more lyrics. The aim of their authors was literature not life, their ideals Italian rather than English, while under the sacred name of love they spun their thin web of delicate fancies, exquisite wordings, and intellectual involvement, prized the more the further it could be removed from reality.

VII

NOW in protesting against these love-poets Herbert does not take issue with their strangely elaborate method. This indeed he considers to be a danger, but one involved in the very nature of poetry. He had himself incurred it.

*When first my lines of heav'nly joyes made mention,
Such was their lustre, they did so excell,*

*That I sought out quaint words and trim invention ;
 My thoughts began to burnish, sprout and swell,
 Curling with metaphors a plain intention,
 Decking the sense, as if it were to sell.*

What he objects to is that the matter of such verse is unequal to the manner. Here is a vast expenditure of good brains on trivial stuff. The love talked about is ephemeral, and there is no true beauty there. *Beauty and beauteous words should go together.* Put solid love, love of the eternal sort, underneath this lovely enchanting language, sugar cane, honey of roses, and we shall have a worthy union. He tries, therefore, to give the love-lyric body, by employing its secular methods upon sacred subjects, guarding them against its obvious dangers, but preserving its intellectual exuberance and aesthetic charm. Imagine Shakespeare's Sonnets with God as the adored object, instead of the lovely boy, and we shall probably have something like what Herbert was dreaming of.

*The wanton lover in a curious strain
 Can praise his fairest fair,
 And with quaint metaphors her curled hair
 Curl o're again.*

*Thou art my loveliness, my life, my light,
 Beautie alone to me.
 Thy bloody death and undeserv'd makes thee
 Pure red and white.*

He honors and imitates the poetry he attacks.

And this imitation is not confined to diction. It extends to situations as well. Coventry Patmore has explained how

“ Fractions indefinitely small
Of interests infinitely great
Count in love’s learned wit for all,
And have the dignity of fate.”

Accordingly his lady’s frown or smile, her temporary absence, his possible neglects, his punctilious execution of her trivial commands, the annoyance his small misbehaviors may have caused her, his delight when permitted to speak her praise, — all these and other such interior incidents make up the events of the lover’s agitated day. Just such are the perplexities of Herbert’s sacred love. Is he grateful enough? What do his fluctuations of fervor and coolness import? Surely his pains can come from nothing but God’s withdrawal, and inner peace must signify that He is near. To count up how much he sacrifices for his great Love fills him with a content almost comparable to that which comes from seeing how unworthy he is of what he has received. To work for God is his greatest delight; his greatest hardship that he is given so little to do. Yet even in lack of employment praise is possible, and he can always busy himself with depicting past errors. Herbert, in short, is a veritable lover, and of the true Petrarchian type. In his poem *A PARODIE* it costs him but a slight

change of phrase to turn one of Donne's love-songs into one of his own kind. Yet in his most ardent moments he keeps clear of eroticism. Never, like Crashaw and the Catholic mystics, does he mingle sexual passion with divine. Filled though his verses are with Biblical allusion, they contain hardly a reference to Solomon's Song. He is a man of sobriety, of intellectual and moral self-command.

VIII

BUT this is not the impression one at first receives. Whoever approaches these fervid little poems with the prepossessions of our time must regard Herbert as a religious sentimentalist, a man of extreme and somewhat morbid piety, attaching undue importance to passing moods. Unfortunately this is the popular impression, and for being such a person he is even admired. Often he is pictured as an aged saint who, through spending a lifetime in priestly offices, has come to find interest only in devout emotions. For such a fantastic picture there is no evidence, though Walton's romantic *Life* has done much to confirm it. In reality, Herbert died under forty; was a priest less than three years; spent his remaining thirty-six years among men who loved power, place, wit, pleasure, and learning; and held his own among them remarkably well. His *CHURCH-PORCH* and the compact sententiousness of his poetic style

show a character somewhat severe, and far removed from sentimentality. His Latin poems on the death of his mother are distinctly lacking in piety. His Latin orations and letters are skilful attempts to win favor with the great. His admirable COUNTRY PARSON is a clear-headed study of the conditions of the minister's work and the means of performing it effectively. In it, while Herbert is much in earnest about religion, he is sagacious too, calculating, and at times almost canny. I give an abridgment of his discussion of preaching:

When the parson preacheth, he procures attention by all possible art, both by earnestnesse of speech — it being naturall to men to think that where is much earnestness there is somewhat worth hearing — and by a diligent and busy cast of his eye on his auditors, with letting them know that he observes who marks and who not ; and with particularizing of his speech now to the younger sort, then to the elder, now to the poor and now to the rich. By these and other means the Parson procures attention ; but the character of his Sermon is Holiness. He is not witty, or learned, or eloquent, but Holy. And this Character is gained first, by choosing texts of Devotion not Controversie, moving and ravishing texts, whereof the Scriptures are full. Secondly, by dipping and seasoning all words and sentences in the heart before they come to the mouth. Thirdly, by turning often and making many Apostrophes to

God, as, "Oh Lord blesse my people and teach them this point;" or, "Oh my Master, on whose errand I come, let me hold my peace and doe thou speak thy selfe." Some such irradiations scatteringly in the Sermon carry great holiness in them. Lastly, by an often urging of the presence and majesty of God, by these or such like speeches: "Oh let us all take heed what we do. God sees us, he sees whether I speak as I ought or you hear as you ought; he sees hearts as we see faces." Such discourses shew very Holy.

I have quoted this passage at some length because it well illustrates Herbert's ever-present use of art. Just as we are ashamed of art and conceal it where it is employed, thinking it corrupts the genuineness of feeling, so is Herbert ashamed of unregulated spontaneity. He thinks he honors feeling best by bringing all its niceties to appropriate expression. He wishes to inspect it through and through, to supply it with intelligence, and to forecast precisely how it should issue in action. What comes short of such fulness is maimed, barbaric, and brutal. Art he considers the appropriate investiture of all we prize, and beauty the mark of its worth. Accordingly he ever seeks

*Not rudely, as a beast,
To runne into an action ;
But still to make Thee prepossesst,
And give it his perfection.*

There are few pages of his poems in which the preciousness of art-constructed beauty is not in some way expressed.

IX

WHEN, however, one has come to view things thus artistically, it becomes a delight through the exercise of art to detach single ingredients of life, free them from the belittlements of reality, and view them in their emotional fulness. To secure beauty, this is a necessary process. In the mixed currents of daily affairs, devotion to my Love is checked by the need of sleep, attention to business, books, or food. I am occupied, forgetful, listless. These foreign matters the artist clears away. Starting with a veritable mood, he allows this to dictate congenial circumstances, to color all details — however minute — with its influence, and so to exhibit a rounded completeness. For such artistic work, requiring intellectual reflection rather than the raw material of emotion, the sentimentalist is disqualified. It is not surprising, then, to find that all the six sonneteers named above, though men who profess to be spending their days pining over unrequited love, are really persons of exceptional intellect, energy, and poise. Sidney was an accomplished soldier, the idol of his time in mind and morals. Spenser was entrusted by his country with a share

in the government of Ireland. Constable was a political plotter and refugee. Shakespeare was beyond all other men "self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honored, self-secure." Drayton was a geographer and historian of England. And "well-languaged Daniel's" chief defect as a poet is that his stock of good sense is somewhat excessive. These men are no love-sick dreamers. They care for other things than Diana and Stella and Idea. They are artists. Of course they have felt the power of love and been shaken by its vicissitudes. But every poet takes on an attitude and utters the emotion which one so circumstanced should feel. It would be as absurd to suppose that in their sonnets these men are simply narrating facts of their own lives as to imagine that Walter Scott went through all the adventures he reports. Their interest is in beauty. Out of scattered and meagre facts they develop ideal situations.

This is just what Herbert did. To-day it is usual to make a sharp distinction between the real and the artificial; but Herbert knows no such contrast. When he is most artificial, he is all aglow with passion; and when he describes one of his own moods, he is full of constructive artifice. That he was a truly religious man, no one will doubt. He certainly felt within himself the conflicts he depicts. In these strange lyrics the course of his wayward and incongruous life may accurately be traced. By attending to biographic hints, and

grouping the poems in something like a living order, I believe we throw much light upon their meanings. The series becomes connectedly interesting, almost dramatic. A highly individual personality emerges and takes the place of a conventional figure, a personality whose work cannot justly be understood without constant and minute reference to the incidents of his life and the ideals of his time. Yet there is duality even here. These personal experiences are after all not the main thing. They are starting-points for subtle intellectual play, occasions for exercise of that beauty-producing art which Herbert loves. Moods which exist in him merely in germ, or which coexist with much else, he heightens, isolates, renders dominant and exclusive. One must be dull indeed not to feel the genuineness of Herbert's religious experience. But he is no mere reporter or historian. We miss his power and splendor if we mistake his imaginative constructions for plain facts. To this sort of misconception we Americans, so little artistic, so veraciously practical, are peculiarly liable. Herbert's contemporaries were not so misled. They knew him to be a poet, sensitive therefore in experience, fertile in invention, rejoicing in shapely construction. Only seven years after his death Christopher Harvey wrote thus in his *Stepping Stone to the Threshold of Mr. Herbert's CHURCH-PORCH*:

"What Church is this? Christ's Church. Who builded it?

Master George Herbert. Who assisted it?

Many assisted; who, I may not say,

So much contention might arise that way.

If I say Grace gave all, Wit straight doth thwart,

And saies, 'All that is there is mine;' But Art

Denies and says, 'There's nothing there but's mine.'

Nor can I easily the right define.

Divide! Say Grace the matter gave, and Wit

Did polish it; Art measur'd and made fit

Each sev'ral piece and fram'd it altogether.

No, by no means. This may not please them neither.

None's well contented with a part alone,

When each doth challenge all to be his own.

The matter, the expressions and the measures

Are equally Art's, Wit's, and Grace's treasures.

Then he that would impartially discuss

This doubtful question must answer thus:

In building of his Temple Master Herbert

Is equally all Grace, all Wit, all Art.

Roman and Grecian Muses, all give way:

One English poem darkens all your day."

Such are the triple factors — pious fervor, intellectual play, and ideal construction — which equally coöperate to fashion Herbert's religious love-lyric.

The Church.

Perfection The Elixir

Lord teach me to desire
All things I do to thee
That I not only may not erre
But also pleasing bee.

A man that lookes on glass
On it may stay his eye:
Or if he please th through it pass
And then the Heav'n espy.

He that doo's ought for thee
marketh y^e deed for thine;
And when the Diabol shall y^e true
Thee saist, this fruit is mine.

All may of that partake.
Nothing can be so ~~low~~, mean
Wh^o will his time take (for thy sake)
will not ~~be~~ grow bright & cleane

This Church.

75

A servant, th this clause,
Makes drudgery divine.
No ^{room} ^{as} ~~no~~ ~~swamp~~ ~~chamber~~, for thy Lawd
Makes that, and th' action fine.

But these are high goodly thoughts.
Happy are they that dare
Set in the light to all their actions
And show what mate they are.

This is y^e famous stone
That turneth all to gold
For y^t w^h God doth touch & move
Can not for life be told.

IV

THE STYLE AND TECHNIQUE

THE STYLE AND TECHNIQUE

I

IN his poem of PROVIDENCE, praising God for his wonderful world, Herbert says:

*And as thy house is full, so I adore
Thy curious art in marshalling thy goods.*

Herbert's own curious art we must now examine, and inquire how he marshals his poetic resources in constructing his stately meditations and religious love-lyrics. How does he build his line, his stanza, and the general plan of his poem? Moreover, how does it happen that he is so difficult to comprehend, and to what extent does he adopt the more extreme literary fashions of his time? These are problems which only slightly concern the general reader, and are of interest chiefly to the student of poetry. But Herbert himself was a student. To these matters he gave much thought. Those who like to think his thoughts after him will desire to accompany him to his workshop and to watch his manipulations there.

Rightly to observe him, we should keep in mind what he designs. It is an error to demand from all poets the same sort of excellence. Each has his own

gospel, and looks out upon life in some special way. That way we must comprehend, and for the moment make it our own, if we would obtain the enjoyment which each is fitted to furnish.

To Herbert poetry did not appeal primarily as a sensuous affair, rich in harmonious sounds and mental visualizations. So it had appealed to the idyllic Spenser and his followers, Giles Fletcher, William Browne, George Wither, and the young Milton. Herbert, it is true, was not unacquainted with *the sweet strains, the lullings and the relishes of it*. The joyous aspects of idealized nature moved him too, and he could on occasion coin a magic phrase; but this is not his proper work. He is but slightly romantic, receptive, and pleasing. He has turned his back on the Spenserians and follows the new realistic and intellectual school of Donne, men whose minds are in revolt against graceful conventionalities, and whose ears are tired of "linked sweetness long drawn out." What they seek is veracity, full individual experience, surprise, freshness of phrase, intellectual stimulus. At a moment's call their flexible wits turn in any direction, and enjoyment for them is measured by the abundance of the material their minds receive. The meagre, the dull, the usual, are their detestation. He who can turn up some new aspect of our many-sided world is their benefactor. The pleasure which an American takes in physical action, these vigorous creatures feel in action of

the mind. They love intellectual complication and difficulty, and turn to verse because more subtlety and suggestion can be packed into it than prose admits. We must not, then, demand that these poets, "as they sing, shall take the ravished soul and lap it in Elysium." That is just what they avoid. They are determined to keep the soul free, interested, and observant. Nor is it necessary to inquire whether their aims are the best. Poetry has many varieties. It is enough to know that one type of it can be had when all its agencies are studied with reference to aims as energetic as these. I hope to show that Herbert did so study it, and that he chose the appropriate means to reach his ends.

II

LET us first consider, then, the formation of his line; and under this heading I will include whatever relates to the foot employed, its regularity or variation, and its "enjambement," assonance, alliteration, rhyme. To effect his purposes the most familiar foot is the best. A movement of an unusual, swift, or melodious sort might distract attention from the thought, where all the pleasure is intended to be found. Feet of three syllables are accordingly discarded. There is no dactylic or anapaestic line in Herbert. And though half a dozen feet of this type are scattered through his

book, they come in cases where an elision occurs, e. g. *And much of Asia and Europe fast asleep*, or where a break in the rhythm makes the meaning more emphatic, e. g. *With noises confused frightening the day*. His working foot is the common iambic, two syllables with an accent on the second. In this rhythm all but eleven of his poems are written, these eleven being trochaic, i. e. two syllables with an accent on the first. **THE INVITATION** and **THE BANQUET** are his most ambitious poems in this kind, **PRAISE** his loveliest. Everywhere his rhythm is of extreme regularity. I know no other poet of his time so constantly exact. Jonson said of Donne that "for not keeping of accent he deserved hanging." Herbert does not follow his master in carelessness of rhythm. In all his verse I count only a dozen irregular lines; and most of these are due either to coalescence of vowels, or to the greater expressiveness thus given to the thought.

But though regular, his line is far from mechanical. He has a feeling for its texture, and is skilful in varying it. Now he shifts its pauses; now he employs the familiar substitution of a trochee for an iambus, especially in the first foot; now he clogs an unaccented syllable with many consonants or with long vowels; now stops the sense at the end of a line, or again runs it over into the next. Here is a well-managed stanza from **THE FLOWER**:

*Who would have thought my shrivel'd heart
Could have recover'd greenness? It was gone
Quite under ground, as flowers depart
To see their mother-root when they have blown;
Where they together
All the hard weather,
Dead to the world, keep house unknown.*

The variety of pauses here, the many "substitutions," especially those of the last two lines, the frequent "running over" of the line, and the "clogging" by such syllables as *ness*, *hard*, and *keep* well illustrate Herbert's skill in varying his rhythms. But he is seldom so swift in movement. By delaying his line he often brings out pensive emotion:

*My feeble spirit, unable to look right,
Like a nipt blossome hung
Discontented;*

or still more commonly blocks its passage and renders it rugged in places where he wishes the thought to linger.

The question of "enjambement" has attracted much attention among scholars. In the poets immediately preceding Herbert it is an important verse-test. The proportion of "run-over" lines in Shakespeare, for example, has been found to be a convenient means of discriminating the later from the earlier plays. But in the poets of Herbert's generation this practice is so fully estab-

lished as to have lost its value as a verse-test. In parts of Webster and Massinger "enjambement" has gone so far that the normal line has almost disappeared. In this matter, as elsewhere, Herbert is sober. He uses about one "run-over" line to three "end-stopped" in his Cambridge poems; and somewhat more, though not so many as one to two, in those of the Bemerton time. The number of "light" and "weak" endings, never considerable, is rather less in the later poems than in the earlier.

In accordance with the largely intellectual cast of his verse, Herbert employs little vowel color. In *BUSINESSE*, the rhyme is carried throughout in *e* and *o*, both sounds being significant and effective. In *HOME*, nine of the thirteen stanzas have a rhyme in *a*. The sharp vowels *i* and *e* are favorites with him; and in poignant poems, like *THE SEARCH*, one suspects that they are intentionally employed. The broad calm vowels *a* and *o* do not so frequently suit his theme, though they dominate an occasional stanza.

*Tempests are calm to thee. They know thy hand,
And hold it fast, as children do their father's,
Which crie and follow. Thou has made poore sand
Check the proud sea, ev'n when it swells and gathers.*

But all this is elementary. I know no group of lines in Herbert of which we can certainly say, as we can of passages in Spenser or Tennyson, that

its vowel effects are an important part of the poetry. Keats speaks of the

“Spenserian vowels that elope with ease,
And float along like birds o’er summer seas.”

None of this sort have taken refuge in Herbert.

Seldom, too, does Herbert strengthen a line with alliteration. We have in *EASTER WINGS*, *Then shall the fall further the flight in me*; in *THE CHURCH-PORCH*, *Bring not thy plough, thy plots, thy pleasures thither*; in *TRINITY-SUNDAY*, *That I may runne, rise, rest in thee*; in *THE GLANCE*, the beautiful phrase, *His swing and sway*; and similarly in *THE STORM*, *Do flie and flow*; in *FAITH* he has changed an unalliterative reading of the Williams Manuscript into *Our flesh and frailtie, death and danger*. But how far are these occasional collocations from the splendors of Spenser! How strange in view of the alliterative exuberance of Southwell, Giles Fletcher, and other contemporaries with whom Herbert must have been familiar! While brief passages of Herbert yield felicitous sounds both of vowels and consonants, a good prose writer generally shows more sensuous feeling. In a poet so fond of music one suspects that this failure to appeal to the ear was not wholly due to dulness, but was part of a deliberate plan to push thought into the foreground and fix attention on harsh, intricate, and veritable experience.

*Verses, ye are too fine a thing, too wise
For my rough sorrows. Cease, be dumbe and mute,
Give up your feet and running to mine eyes,
And keep your measures for some lover's lute,
Whose grief allows him musick and a ryme.
For mine excludes both measure, tune, and time.*

In view of his intellectual aims, Herbert avoids, too, the long and melodious lines prized by his predecessors. The fourteen-syllabled line, the Alexandrine with its twelve syllables, played a great part in the musical Elizabethan verse; but there is no instance of either in Herbert. This is not because he makes two short lines out of what his predecessors might have written as a single long one. In the two instances where his added lines would make fourteen syllables, and in the other two where they would make twelve, each line has its independent life and its own rhyming word. His longest line is ten syllables, his shortest three, except in refrain. The frequent use of refrain might seem to conflict with his avoidance of the mellifluous; but I think he is attracted to it for the sake of its iteration of thought, and not for its value as sound. For driving home the dominant note of a poem it serves him admirably.

As regards rhyme, Herbert follows the practice of his age in making it a necessary factor, not an occasional adjunct, of verse. Heroic blank verse was first used by the Earl of Surrey for translating

the Aeneid, and was then shaped by Marlowe for dramatic dialogue. Its first considerable use for other purposes was in Milton's *Paradise Lost*. There is no instance of it in Herbert. Nor was he misled in another direction. Sidney, G. Harvey, Webbe, Puttenham, Fraunce, Campion, and others, mostly of the Pembroke connection, had been experimenting with hexameters and other delicate and rhymeless rhythms. They sought to introduce classical measures, and to attune the English ear, long accustomed to accentual stress, to a quantitative. Herbert does not follow them. His classical training, his love of refinement, his use of these measures in Latin verse, his disposition to experiment, all exposed him to the false fashion. But the themes with which he dealt were too serious, and the intellectual bent of his poems too distinct, to let him be turned toward dilettantism. Perhaps, too, he was protected by a certain indifference to the niceties of verbal sounds. Whatever the cause, he writes no unrhymed stanza.

Modern poets often content themselves with rhyming alternate lines, allowing the remainder to go unrhymed. Herbert, like most of his contemporaries, tolerates nothing so loose. To his mind, a poem is a thoroughgoing system of rhymes. Everything within it must have its echo. Two lines at the opening of *JOSEPH'S COAT* are the only pair left unrhymed in all his verse. So exceptional a case is, I suspect, due to an error of the copyist,

and I have proposed an emendation. In THE SIZE, too, where a line occurs with nothing to match it, Ernest Rhys and Dr. Grosart very properly believe that a line has dropped out, which they undertake to rewrite. Herbert often uses an unrhymed line as a refrain. By this means he increases the effect of the refrain as a disjointed cry. Occasionally, too, as strikingly in DENIAL, he conveys a sense of incompleteness and dissatisfaction by a final line left unrhymed. But absences of rhyme in refrain or abortive ending are not an abandonment of the rhyming principle. They presuppose it. If rhyme were not practically universal, such intentional omissions would be ineffective.

Yet while Herbert's rhyme is universal, it is rude and subordinate. Poets who rhyme largely usually care little for "perfect" rhymes. That is Herbert's case. He rhymes *friend* and *wind*, *feast* and *quest*, *Lord* and *stirr'd*, *mud* and *food*, *much* and *crouch*, *blisse* and *Paradise*, *wedding* and *reading*, *matter* and *water*, *creation* and *fashion*, *runnes thin* and *coming in*, *unhappinesse* and *sicknesses*, *traveller* and *manner*, *school-masters* and *messengers*. Such sounds serve well enough to mark an ending line, and are found on every page of his book. Stranger still to a modern ear is his use of identical rhyme, — *pleasure* and *displeasure*, *please* and *displease*, *does* and *undoes*, *hold thee* and *withold thee*, *write* and *right*, *lies* and *lyes*, *know* and *no* ; while the words *art*, *hour*, *power*, *round*, are each repeatedly made

to rhyme with themselves. Rhymes like these were not unusual then; nor even in the abundant rhyme employed, objectionable. Herbert has his favorite rhymes too. *Treasure* and *pleasure* occur eleven times; *glorie* and *storie* ten; and *one* and *alone* eight.

When we turn from his employment of single rhymes to his combination of them, the same rough method is apparent. It would be alien to his purpose to study effects of contrast or intensification through neighboring rhyme. In the following examples accidental similarity to associated rhymes lowers the worth of an entire group: *here, are, cleare, spare*; or in another four-lined stanza of the same poem (THE ROSE), *choose, oppose, refuse, rose*. In a five-lined stanza of OBEDIENCE he has *bleed, need, thee, agree, deed*. How the two sets of rhymes, which should be contrasted, jar in their similarity! In SION, two successive couplets have *things, wings, sing, king*. In JORDAN and AFFLICTION, six-lined poems, we have the following unpleasing combinations: *ascend, sense, friend, pretence, penn'd, expense*; and again, *ours, more, bowres, store, no, bow*. Of course instances occur where the chief sounds of a poem are not left to accident. I have already called attention to BUSINESS and HOME. How pleasing, too, is the parallelism of the tenth and eleventh stanzas of THE SEARCH, where the repeated thought is accompanied by partial recurrence of the same rhyme!

This brief exhibit of Herbert's practice will sufficiently show that his rhyming is managed, as it should be, by his intellect and not by his ear. That each line be brought into correspondence with some other line is a part of his poetic plan, a plan not suggested by the sensuous demands of his nature, but accepted with much else from the customs of his time. Once accepted, it is worked with the energetic and resourceful ingenuity which characterize him everywhere. But we have seen how in all his rhythmic work mystery has no place. Mind and matter are kept distinct. Compact and trenchant thought is what he prizes, and from this nothing is allowed to draw off the reader's attention. Those concords of sweet sound which in the great poets are of equal moment with the rational meaning, and ever inseparable from it, are not for him. His lines do not cling in the ear like strains of music. We recall them gladly, but only for their crowded significance. He did not feel those wide and romantic suggestions which lend untraceable magic to Spenser, Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Shelley, and Tennyson. Such mysticism would have been incongruous with his purpose.

III

IN turning from the qualities of Herbert's line to consider those of his stanza, this should be noted: a poet was then expected to fashion his metre almost as much as his subject. Few standard measures were at hand. Poetry was for the most part plastic, and only to a small extent had it settled into fixed forms. In this there was both gain and loss. It encouraged originality, and left many paths open which are now closed; but from what was already done a poet could learn little about the carrying power of different metres. He must try his own experiments. The principal forms already tested were these: In iambic five-foot verse, couplets, alternate rhymes, and heroic blank verse; then the "rime royal," or four-lined stanza with alternate rhyme, used by Surrey in his lament for Wyatt, and most familiar to us in Gray's *Elegy*. A couplet added made a favorite six-lined stanza. Chaucer and Spenser had used effectively a stanza of seven lines, rhyming *a b a b b c c*; and Wyatt and Surrey had acclimatized the fourteen-lined sonnet, with two accredited rhyming systems. Spenser built up a gorgeous stanza of nine lines ending in an Alexandrine; and this line of six iambics was often used in alternation with one of seven to form "the poulter's measure." Couplets of seven iambics were common, as were those of four iambics used largely by Gower.

These latter were often grouped into stanzas of four lines with alternate rhyme, our long metre. In ballads, our common metre — four iambics followed by three — was of frequent occurrence. Beyond these few measures each poet was left pretty much to his own devices.

Of these dozen accepted forms Herbert employs but half. As has been said already, he has no blank verse, Alexandrines, nor lines of seven iambics. He does not use Chaucer's stanza, nor Spenser's. While he is fond of the sonnet, he confines himself either to the Shakespearian form or to one peculiar to himself, and never employs in a sonnet less than seven rhymes. The great sonneteers divide their sonnet into two parts, the octave and the sestet, to each of which they assign a different function: the octave describing a situation or stating facts whose significance is then drawn out in the sestet. Herbert's seventeen sonnets show no such inner logic. The majority of them do not even come to a full pause at the end of the octave, and their reflective or applicatory portion is usually contained in the last two or three lines.

Yet if he rejects so much, it is only that he may create the more. He invents for each lyrical situation exactly the rhythmic setting which befits it. How rich his invention is, and how flexibly responsive to the demands of distinguishable moods, may be seen in this: of his one hundred

and sixty-nine poems, one hundred and sixteen are written in metres which are not repeated. Two out of every three are unique. I may exhibit the same fact in greater detail by saying that while forty-one cases occur of four-lined iambic stanzas, these present twenty different types. Nineteen of the twenty are used but once; six of them twice; two three times; and only one as many as four times. The different effects are secured by varying the number of feet in a line, and by varying the rhyming scheme in all its three possible ways: *a a b b*, *a b a b*, and *a b b a*. Herbert's twenty-two poems written in five-lined iambics are also all unique. Of his eleven poems in trochaics, seven are unique and only two repeated. Such variety of practice is not exactly experimentation, for it does not result in fixing forms for subsequent use. But it strikingly exhibits the scope of his metric power and his delicate persistence in fitting form to thought. Each set of his emotions he clothes in individual garb; and only when what is beneath is similar is the same set of clothing used a second time. So characteristic a feature of Herbert's poetry is this ceaseless variety that it has seemed well to call attention to it in the notes. At each poem it is stated whether and where Herbert uses the metre again.

Herbert has no favorite stanza. One type only does he employ as many as five times. Yet perhaps his inclination to long stanzas, and to those

with widely spaced rhymes, deserves notice. He has forty-six varieties of six-lined stanza; four, of seven-lined; eight, of eight-lined; and five, of ten-lined. In JUSTICE, SEPULCHRE, AN OFFERING, and THE GLANCE, one of the rhymes jumps to the fourth line away; in COMPLAINING, SIGHS AND GRONES, and UNGRATEFULNESSE, to the fifth; and in THE COLLAR there are rhymes as wide as the seventh and even the tenth. THE COLLAR is his only irregular and stanzaless poem, but formlessness was essential there. Indeed, his sense of form is so insistent that sometimes a long succession of couplets or alternate rhymes wearies him; he craves some sort of pause and separation. THE CHURCH MILITANT and LOVE UNKNOWN are broken up into sections, almost like long stanzas, by the repetition of a line. The value of repetition he fully understands, and, besides the refrain, employs it in a multitude of covert forms.

IV

IN calling attention to Herbert's ability to shape a poem as a whole, we may claim for him a high degree of originality. Little had been done in this kind before. Our early lyric poetry is more remarkable for vividness than for form. Its writers feel keenly and speak daringly. By some means or other they usually succeed in stirring in their reader's heart feelings similar to their own. But

not often do they show that sense of order and coherence which is expected in every other species of Fine Art. Perhaps words are easier material than paint, stone, or sound, and lend themselves more readily to caprice. Of course without a certain sequence no lyric could picture a poet's feeling. Near the beginning the occasion of the feeling is announced; then follow its manifestations, and at the close it is usually connected in some way with action, resolve, or judgment. Such an emotional scheme is often unfolded with much delicacy and evenness in the songs of Campion, and in both the songs and sonnets of Sidney and Shakespeare.

But these are vague divisions, the second especially so. They do not alone give firmness of form. They make poetic writing rather than finished poems. Stirred by some passion, real or imaginary, the poet begins to write, pours forth his feeling until the supply or the reader is exhausted, and then stops. He has no predetermined beginning, middle, and end. *Part with part has no private amitie*. The place and amount of each portion is fixed by no plan of the whole, but rather by the waywardness of the writer. In most early lyrics, even the best, stanzas might be omitted, added, or transposed, without considerable damage. Each stands pretty much by itself. In the two stanzas of Ben Jonson's stirring song, "Drink to me only with thine eyes," neither is necessary to the other.

Those of his "Queen and huntress chaste and fair" might about as well have taken any other order. This is the more remarkable because into the drama Jonson carried form in much the same conscious way that Herbert carried it into lyric poetry. But if in the early lyrists the desire for closely knitted structure is slight, it is feebler still in the writers of reflective verse. These men wander wherever thought or a good phrase leads, and are rarely restrained by any compacted plan. In short, we read most of the early poetry for the sake of splendid bursts, vigorous stanzas, pithy lines. To obtain these, we willingly pass through much that is formless and uninteresting. Seldom do we get singleness of impression. Sidney in his *Defence of Poesie* complained of the poets of his day that "their matter is *quodlibet*, which they never marshall into any assured rank, so that the readers cannot tell where to put themselves." Until Herbert appeared, unity of structure was little regarded.

To such articulated structure Herbert devoted himself, and what he accomplished forms one of his two considerable contributions to English poetry. In his pages we see for the first time a great body of lyrics in which the matter and the form are at one. Impulsive and ardent though Herbert seems, he holds himself like a true artist responsive to his shaping theme. Not that he acquires power of this sort at once, or has it always. THE CHURCH-PORCH is loose, and in many of the

ecclesiastical poems of his Cambridge years, there is only such general structure as springs from announced theme, emotional development, and moral ending. But the demand for form is deep in him, and more and more he puts himself at its service. In something like a quarter of his work he attains a solidity of structure hitherto unknown. That his achievements in this field exercised little influence over his immediate successors is true, and surprising. But he set the most difficult of examples. Strong form is not catching. Only a man of energy and restraint is capable of it. Other qualities, too, of Herbert's style obscured his form. So rich is he in suggestion, so intellectually difficult, so tender in religious appeal, that attention is easily withdrawn from his structure and becomes fixed on details. Whatever the cause, the poets who follow him, and are most affected by his invention of the religious love-lyric, have small regard for his second invention, — structural plan. C. Harvey, Vaughan, Crashaw, Traherne, are conspicuously lacking in restraint. They do not appear to notice the artistic weaving of Herbert's verse, which has brought it through the rough usage of nearly three centuries; while their own often more brilliant work now lies largely neglected. Even to-day few think of Herbert as one of our pioneers in poetic structure.

Briefly to present the evidence for this solidity of form is not easy. The point to be proved is

not that Herbert exercised remarkable skill in building certain poems. Occasional fine structure was not unknown before. What Herbert did was to vindicate unity of design as a working factor of poetry. He showed how by its use much may be said in little. He made it plain that any theme, if fully and economically embodied, will not lack interest. It is therefore the frequency of his work in this kind which I wish to show. This I think I can do most effectively by dividing his one hundred and sixty-nine poems into four groups, according to the prevalence in them of the principle of form. There appear to be fifty-eight in which there is no wandering from a predetermined plan. But recognizing that judgments may differ on a matter so delicate, I print the list; throwing out, however, the seventeen sonnets, as a species of verse where form would more naturally be found; and also the half-dozen curiosities, like *THE ALTAR* and *EASTER WINGS*, whose form is usually supposed to be their all. The corrected list (1) is then the following: *AARON*, *TO ALL ANGELS AND SAINTS*, *THE BRITISH CHURCH*, *BUSINESSE*, *CLASPING OF HANDS*, *OUR LIFE IS HID*, *DECAY*, *DENIAL*, *DIALOGUE*, *DOTAGE*, *FRAILTIE*, *THE GLANCE*, *HUMILTIE*, *A TRUE HYMNE*, the second *JORDAN*, *JUDGEMENT*, *LIFE*, *LOVE UNKNOWN*, *MAN'S MEDLEY*, *THE METHOD*, *MORTIFICATION*, *THE PEARL*, *THE PILGRIMAGE*, the second *PRAYER*, *THE PULLEY*, *THE QUIDDITIE*, *SINNES ROUND*,

SUBMISSION, UNGRATEFULNESSE, THE WINDOWS, THE WORLD. I do not assert that these are Herbert's best poems. In many cases they are not. But let any one read ten of them, drawn at random, and he will be convinced that Herbert was the master of a method which had not been practised in English poetry before.

If we attempt to catalogue (4) those of his poems which are most lacking in form, I suppose they will be these: CHARMS AND KNOTS, THE CHURCH-PORCH, THE DISCHARGE, DIVINITIE, THE ELIXER, GRIEVE NOT, FAITH, HOME, LENT, LONGING, MAN, MISERIE, the third PRAISE, THE PRIESTHOOD, PROVIDENCE, THE SEARCH, SIGHS AND GRONES, SUNDAY, the first TEMPER, the first VANITIE. Yet how remarkable is the list! Though less completely formed than anything else in Herbert, these twenty poems are superior in structure to most of the verse of Herbert's day, or indeed of ours.

Between these extreme lists (1) and (4) I find two others, one (2) of sixty poems, in which there is an evident plan adhered to throughout, a plan, however, which lacks the rigidity of outline which marked list (1); and another (3) of thirty-four, in which, while unity has not disappeared, there are considerable digressions from the proposed theme. Examples of (2) are ASSURANCE, THE BAG, THE CHURCH MILITANT, THE CHURCH-FLOORE, CONSCIENCE, THE CROSSE, DULNESSE,

THE FAMILIE, THE FLOWER, THE FORERUNNERS, GIDDINESSE, GRATEFULNESSE, OBEDIENCE, THE ODOUR, PEACE, THE ROSE, THE SACRIFICE, THE SIZE, VERTUE, UNKINDNESSE, — all poems of admirable texture, and in most cases working out their purpose better than if they had been more severe. Examples of (3), where the form is more broken, are the AFFLICTIONS, THE BANQUET, THE CALL, CHURCH-RENTS AND SCHISMES, COMPLAINING, CONSTANCIE, CONTENT, THE GLIMPSE, GRACE, GRIEF, MATTENS, REPENTANCE, THE STORM. It will be noticed that these, which are less completely formed, are often designedly so either for the sake of expressing the incoherence of grief, or, in reflective poems, to afford ampler range for thought. The general result of our inquiry must be astonishment that in the beginning, when firm form was first discovered by our poetry as an important element of its power, it should have been introduced on such an extensive scale by a single writer.

But though whoever reads the poems of lists (1) and (2) will feel their solidity, it is well to examine the means by which such structural firmness is secured. One simple means distinguishes Herbert's work from that of most of his brother poets, — he knows when to stop. Each poem takes up a single mood, relation, or problem of divine love, and ends with its clear exposition. His poems are, accordingly, at once short and adequate. Only

four of them exceed one hundred and fifty lines. Ten are between fifty and a hundred; sixty, between twenty-five and fifty; and the remainder, nearly a hundred, are less than twenty-five. Such brevity is the more significant when we remember that Herbert is no epigrammatist, like Herrick, but is handling subjects of unusual range and profundity.

Three stanzas make one of his favorite lengths. The theme is announced in the first, and is then seen to divide; one of the divisions being treated in the second, the other in the third stanza. This plan is followed with more or less precision in two of the AFFLICTIONS, H. BAPTISME, THE CALL, CHURCH-LOCK AND KEY, CHURCH-MUSICK, CHURCH-RENTS AND SCHISMES, DOTAGE, FRAILTIE, THE GLANCE, the two JORDANS, JUDGEMENT, LIFE, LOVE, MARIE MAGDALENE, NATURE, THE POSIE, THE QUIDDITIE, SINNES ROUND, THE STORM, TRINITIE-SUNDAY, THE WINDOWS. At times, however, the opposing aspects of the subject are so evident that a stanza can be given to each without the need of introduction, an arrangement very satisfactory to Herbert's economical and antithetic soul. Examples are the second ANTIPHON, BITTER-SWEET, CLASPING OF HANDS, THE DAWNING, EASTER WINGS, THE FOIL, the first JUSTICE, the first SINNE, THE WATER-COURSE.

In a few instances narrative directs the order, as

in the great AFFLICTION, THE BAG, THE CHURCH MILITANT, HUMILITIE, LOVE UNKNOWN, THE PILGRIMAGE, PEACE, THE SACRIFICE. Here the plan permits looseness, and the poems are less shapely. When the time-order followed is of a more subtle kind, almost unobservedly accompanying the development of an inner mood, Herbert reaches his climax of easy and inevitable structure. Cases are ARTILLERIE, ASSURANCE, THE COLLAR, CONSCIENCE, THE CROSSE, DIALOGUE, THE FLOWER, GRATEFULNESSE, THE METHOD, MORTIFICATION, THE PRIESTHOOD, THE PULLEY, SION, THE STARRE.

Apart from solidity of general structure, Herbert is ingenious in making minor modifications of form bring out peculiarities of his subject. Baldly stated, these may appear artificial contrivances; but they appear so only because we do not at once notice that inherent union of subject and form which was in Herbert's mind. He will make everything meaningful, and altogether banish wilfulness. *Let me not think an action mine own way* is ever his artistic prayer. Accordingly he tries to supply every intellectual subtlety of his subject with its appropriate means of outward expression. Sometimes this is furthered by an adjustment of rhyme. In AARON and CLASPING OF HANDS, where each stanza is to present different aspects of a single thought, the stanzas have identical rhymes. In MAN, which is dedicated

to showing the range and variety of man's nature, almost every stanza has a different rhyming-system. By rhyming together the first and last lines of each long stanza of *THE ODOUR*, a curiously shut-in yet pervasive quality is given to that fragrant poem. And when it is desired to show how in the vicious circle of *SINNE* one step leads to another, the final line of each stanza becomes the first of the next, and the closing line of the poem is identical with the beginning. I have already noticed the broken rhymes of *DENIAL*, which accord so beautifully with the inner failure of the poem; and perhaps I should mention the successive pruning of the rhymes in *PARADISE*, and the triplicity of everything in *TRINITIE-SUNDAY*.

But Herbert has a final group of poems which have done much to alienate from him the sympathy of modern readers, though they commended him to his own generation. They are poems whose eccentricity of form seems to have no inner justification. Of course we know that every species of elaborate artificiality was then in fashion. Embroidery pleased. Probably Herbert himself did on occasion enjoy a ruffled shirt. I will not attempt fully to defend him. I merely say the number of such poems is small. I count but nine: *THE ALTAR*, *AN ANAGRAM*, *EASTER WINGS*, *HEAVEN*, *HOPE*, *JESU*, *LOVE-JOY*, *OUR LIFE IS HID*, *A WREATH*. And are these all artificial? I am willing to throw over *AN ANAGRAM*, *HEAVEN*, and

JESU, as badly marked with the time-spirit. But I maintain that the others are at worst pretty play, while often their strange forms are closely connected with their passionate matter. One who was ever accustomed to let significance dictate structure has here certainly pushed his principle to a fantastic extreme. Our feeling does not easily accompany his. But this is largely due to dulness. We let ourselves be repelled by outward strangeness, and do not notice how in most of these cases Herbert has made his start from within. In the notes I have endeavored to show that many of these are veritable poems, which could not be more appropriately fashioned. Let any one study sympathetically *HOPE, PARADISE, A WREATH, EASTER WINGS, LOVE-JOY*, and he will discover how exquisite poetry can be when most remote from present habits of thought.

V

ONE striking peculiarity of Herbert's style remains to be considered, its obscurity. To this his antique diction is often thought to contribute, and no doubt modern readers do find some of Herbert's words unfamiliar. He lived three hundred years ago. Words, it is true, are strangely durable, more so than the everlasting hills; but a series of centuries has its effect in superseding some and transforming others. Her-

bert's language has worn remarkably well. He had an instinct for the firm, clear, well-rooted, and richly significant words, and no inclination like Spenser or Browning for words of an antique, fanciful, local, or half-built sort. His diction, therefore, belongs in general to no special age. Less than fifty of his words would appear strange in a book of to-day. But of these fifty something like half are altogether dead, and when met with in his pages convey to an ordinary reader no meaning whatever. Such words are these: *bandie*, *behither*, *cyens*, *demain*, *glozing*, *handsell*, *imp*, *indear*, *ingross*, *jag*, *licorous*, *lieger*, *optick*, *perspective*, *pomander*, *quidditie*, *quip*, *rheume*, *sconse*, *snudge*, *sommers*, *stour*, *vizard*. Yet these, after all, occasion little practical difficulty. They occur only once or twice, and are then easily explainable. More trouble is likely to arise from a second small group of misleading words, i. e. familiar and frequent words used by Herbert in senses which differ in some particular from those current to-day; e. g. *complexion* with him = disposition or temperament; *consort* = concert; *his* often = its; *move* often = propose, request; *neat* = refined, subtle; *owe* often = own; *pretend* = seek to obtain; *sphere* often = rather the heaven than the earth, i. e., the concave inclosure of the universe assumed in the Ptolemaic astronomy; *stay* often = be absent; *store* = abundance; *storie* = history; *still* = always; *sweet* usually = sweet-smelling; *then*

often=than ; *thrall* = bondage ; *whenas* = while. Through these deceptive words a modern reader is likely enough to miss Herbert's meaning. When several of them occur together, they may altogether destroy the understanding of a line; e. g. line 53 of PROVIDENCE: *Nothing ingendred doth prevent his meat*. He will often miss the rhyme too, unless he remembers that the Irish pronunciation of English is much nearer to Herbert's than is our own. For example, in a stanza of CONSTANCIE, lines 2, 3, and 5 rhyme:

*Whom none can work or woove
To use in any thing a trick or sleight,
For above all things he abhorres deceit.
His words and works and fashion too
All of a piece, and all are cleare and straight.*

But when it appears that time has damaged his words but slightly, and that he more than any of his predecessors or contemporaries studied the sequence of his thought and avoided caprice, Herbert's prevailing obscurity becomes the more puzzling. What can have made a writer whose diction is on the whole sound, and who is ever alert, artistic, and highly rational, so difficult to read? For difficult he is. No other English poet, not even Donne or Browning, gives his reader such frequent pause. Nearness of acquaintance does not remove the intricacy. It is perpetual. Or if at times poems like THE ELIXER, GRATEFULNESSE,

THE METHOD, SUBMISSION, the second TEMPER, UNKINDNESSE, show that he might have been as simple in verse as he regularly is in prose, the moment's lucidity merely makes the prevailing darkness deeper. A trait of style so marked in a man of unmistakable power is apt to be connected with his genius. What at first appears a surface blemish, — and a strange one, — traced intimately, runs down to the sources of strength. I believe the intricacy of Herbert is not a matter to be denied, ignored, or condoned, but to be studied, sympathized with, loved. It has been induced by what is most distinctive of him. This jangled utterance is his true tone. He could not have spoken so well if he had spoken more clearly.

A considerable cause of both the obscurity and the value of Herbert's verse is to be found in its private character. None of his English poems received public criticism. That they were written with a purpose of ultimate publication appears in the direct appeals to a reader in THE DEDICATION, THE CHURCH-PORCH, SUPERLIMINARE, THE ROSE, and perhaps THE CHURCH-FLOORE. The corrections made during the time between the Williams Manuscript and the Bodleian point in the same direction, as do the many references to his art which are scattered throughout his book. The kind of private circulation which his poems obtained is shown by the Williams Manuscript itself. They were handed about among his friends. But a writer's mental

attitude is of one kind when he is directly preparing matter for the press; it is widely different when year after year he goes on analyzing his inner life, with only a general notion that perhaps some day the public may be informed. In the first case, the expected judgment of readers is sure to be a weighty influence, steadily constraining toward intelligibility. In the second, a writer is left very much to himself. Individuality of diction, accuracy and fulness of record, now become the qualities sought. What makes for display and for swift solicitation of other minds is neglected. Notable examples of private verse are Shakespeare's Sonnets and Mrs. Browning's Sonnets from the Portuguese. Every one will see that these would have been written differently if designed immediately for the public eye. In such poems we have the advantage that the writers

Admit us to their bed-chamber, before

They appeare trim and drest

To ordinarie suitours at the doore.

Yet for such intimate disclosures we pay heavily. We are left to find our own way to the right point of view. Connections of thought which existed in the poet's mind are not worked out. If we do not at once catch his mood, all is blind. Transitions and allusions are abrupt, not calculated with a view to our comprehension. And such is the poetry of Herbert, precious in its very obscurity. We hear

its writer thinking. These verses were written for himself, and require imagination on our part. We must know where to stand, and observe. In one mood all will be clear which in another was hopelessly tangled. Such imaginative difficulties will be eased by the arrangement of the poems here adopted, and by the brief statement of the Subject prefixed to each.

Perhaps, too, in this connection the strangeness of Herbert's titles is partially explainable. If he had prepared his book for the press, he would not have been likely to give to five poems the same title, AFFLICTION. And what does ARTILLERIE mean, or THE BUNCH OF GRAPES, CHURCH-LOCK AND KEY, CLASPING OF HANDS, THE COLLAR, THE DISCHARGE, DOTAGE, THE ELIXER, GIDDINESSE, THE GLANCE, JOSEPH'S COAT, MAN'S MEDLEY, MORTIFICATION, THE PULLEY, THE QUIDDITIE, THE QUIP, THE SIZE, THE WINDOWS? These titles convey little information. To understand them one must read the poem of which they form an integral part. With its emotion they are filled, and from it they derive their significance. When the poem is read, and one has come into sympathy with it, how fully and with what originality they epitomize it! Here, as ever, Herbert demands his reader's patience and imagination, himself doing little to smooth the path of approach. For gaining a hearing, this is an error; but it is one to which a solitary soul is liable, and

one which, revealing that soul more fully, increases the permanent worth of the utterance.

But a second sort of intricacy in Herbert's verse publicity could not have cured. It is inherent in his theme, for his is a poetry of struggle. It deals with clashing desires. Herbert himself called it *a picture of the many spiritual Conflicts that have past betwixt God and my Soul*. For such conflict the general reader is unfortunately not prepared. The epithet "Holy" early became attached to Herbert's name. Vaughan uses it in his Preface to *Silex Scintillans*, and again in his poem *The Match*. Oley adopts it in his second Preface to *THE COUNTRY PARSON*, as does Walton in the fifth chapter of *The Complete Angler*. It thus became established; but a more misleading epithet could not have been devised. The thoughts which it suggests hide Herbert from our view. By a holy man we mean a whole man, i. e. one for whom the partition between divine and human things has been broken down. He is one in whom the pain of obedience is ended, and whose feelings and acts now naturally accord with God's. The mystics are of this holy, monistic type: Crashaw, Traherne, Madame Guyon. Herbert is steadily dualistic. For him there is ever a contrast between God's ways and man's, and his problem is how to bring the two together without undue loss to either. To the last he never settles the question. God's law has worth, but so have his own desires, his own ambitions.

*His stuffe is flesh, not brasse ; his senses live,
And grumble oft that they have more in him
Then he that curbs them.*

He always remains

*A wonder tortur'd in the space
Betwixt this world and that of grace.*

The story of the clash within his own breast of these mighty opposites is too real and typically human to be told with smoothness. Smoothness and ease of comprehension characterize the poets of the eighteenth century, men far more artificial than the men of the seventeenth. Indeed, I believe it will be found that the most lucid periods of our language are the least sincere, and that writers peculiarly intricate are often at the same time peculiarly sweet, tender, and veracious. What startling insights into reality has Donne! And how inevitably we distrust the lucidity of Pope! These metaphysical poets often seem artificial because they observe profoundly and speak individually.

Yet privacy and lack of inner harmony were only subordinate causes of Herbert's obscurity. Its fundamental ground lies in the mental exuberance of his age, to which I alluded at the beginning of this essay. The joy in eventful living which marks the age of Elizabeth did not pass away with her. It remained, though in a changed field. The soul of man took the place of the outer world, while the old delight in daring and

difficult deeds appeared in this new sphere as a kind of intellectual audacity and an ardent exploration of mental enigmas. To how many strange theories did the England of the first half of the seventeenth century give rise! To exploit a new doctrine became more exciting than a voyage to the Spanish Main. Play is pleasure in one's own exertions. Accordingly, ages and individuals that have not lost the heart of boyhood always enjoy obstacles. Herbert certainly did, only that his exceptional artistic restraint enabled him to refine and ennoble the extravagances of this temper. For system-building and the labors of the theologian he did not care. But with equal energy as a poet he threw himself into expressing complex human passions and the deep realities of his own life. Ingenuity he enjoyed. Anything like "smoothness" would have been thought by him and all his friends to defraud them of one of their chief pleasures:

*He who craves all the minde,
And all the soul, and strength, and time,
If the words onely ryme,
Justly complains that somewhat is behinde
To make his verse, or write a hymne in kinde.*

A frequent form in which this enjoyment of difficulty manifests itself is condensation. To put as much meaning as possible into a given compass is a difficult feat. He is the master who can force words to carry a little more significance than is

their wont. In this Herbert was peculiarly skilful. His compactness has seldom been equalled. It was one of the chief reasons for the popularity of his book with the generation which followed him, and one of the chief sources of the obscurity which is felt by his readers to-day. Herbert loved proverbs, his own or those of others. He formed an extensive collection of them, published after his death under the title of JACULA PRUDENTUM. To his mind sententiousness was ever honorable. But taste has changed. We like our mental nutriment more loosely mixed. Even to his contemporaries Herbert seemed hard in the grain. What Walton makes him say of his body is equally true of his style: *He had too thoughtful a Wit, a Wit like a penknife in too narrow a sheath, too sharp for his body.*

Herbert's style, then, is difficult because of the compact abundance of his thought, because in it we hear the jarring of moods only half harmonized, because it has not been studied with immediate reference to the public eye, and because of historic changes in our language. But such defects are virtues, too. Calling on a reader, though they do, for a large amount of study, for time and sympathetic attention, they reward him with the disclosure of a rich, pathetic, and individual personality. In Herbert's most intricate obscurity there is no carelessness or clumsiness, no vagueness or wilfulness. Undoubtedly he does occasionally exhibit violence

and bad taste. But I believe that, tried by the standard which had then been reached, he has exceptional restraint of style. The last section of this paper shall be devoted to the negative task of showing how his artistic sense saved him from the worst enormities of his unlicensed age. Let us see what Herbert did not do.

VI

I HAVE already remarked how, during the first half of the seventeenth century, language and its accompanying refinements of thought were studied by the Western nations as they never had been studied before. Following the increase of comfort and splendor in the appointments of daily life came the desire for elegance of speech. The great creative periods, too, of literature were drawing to a close, and the decadent tendency to magnify the literary instrument was asserting itself. Under many forms this tendency appeared. It sprang up in England just before Herbert's birth as Euphuism; during his life it ravaged Italy as Marinism; six years before his death Gongora died, who set the fashion in Spain; and shortly after his death it appeared in France as *Préciosité*. Each time and country shows its own variety of the common movement, but all alike aim at fashioning a literary language which shall be removed from that of the vulgar. Poetry fosters

such aims. No poet except Wordsworth was ever willing to call a spade a spade, though most poets avoid the worse vulgarity of calling it an agricultural implement. These men did not. Even the greatest of them inflates his phrase. Milton talks of hens as "tame villatic fowl" (*Samson Agonistes*, l. 1695). In a sophisticated time paraphrases, antitheses, inversions, paradoxes, — every form of language is welcome which puts a gulf between the common man and the man of culture. These linguistic exquisites are in love with the unexpected.

Now it would be manifestly absurd to censure in all its forms this inclination to intellectual and verbal nicety. Provided it yields an adequate return for thinking, a poem which makes us think is none the worse on that account. Our fathers judged it better. Later, as the liking for mental exertion declined, a term of abuse was invented which has ever since lent aid and comfort to thoughtless attacks upon thought. A poet who packs his phrase is said to be full of "conceits." That is the word. I have sought far and wide for a definition of it, but can find nothing precise. Perhaps it is incapable of precise definition, a kind of word of degrees, meaning merely that the writer is more ingenious than his critic likes, and that he sees in his subject wider relations than altogether suit modern taste. But there are base conceits and noble ones. By the base I mean

those where ingenuity is sought for its own sake. These disregard the feeling which should run deep and formative throughout a poem. They draw attention from the whole and fix it on the parts, the writer meanwhile obtruding himself at the expense of his subject. These faults are most manifest in illustrations. Without the ever-present words "as" and "like," a poet cannot proceed; for it is his business not so much directly to describe as to let us see into the heart of things, and there discover the feelings which agitate his breast. But a poet who is in pursuit of novelty, and is pleased with intellectual play, is in danger of tracing similarities so remote or superficial that they part company with what should be illustrated; and these are base conceits.

But there are noble ones, too. A mind aglow with meditative feeling finds its mood reflected from every object that meets its sight or remembrance. Emotional association has a wonderful power of transforming small things to great, remote to near, things rarely thought of to luminous expositors of the customary. Just in proportion to a poet's power will be his readiness for such wide-ranging insight. An unimpassioned reader, who has not brought himself into full sympathy with the emotion described, may judge much to be artificial which is in reality tenderly exact. A passage of pregnant unusualness, whose full import cannot be caught at once, is easily denounced

as a conceit. I would not defend the substitution of puzzles for poetry; but the test for a conceit is, after all, simple. Does it by thought exclude feeling, or does it through thought embody feeling in some new, individual, and subtle way?

That Herbert occasionally indulges in conceits of the baser sort — mental escapades, unprompted by emotion — is undeniable. So did every poet from Shakespeare to Dryden, with the possible exception of Herrick. Herbert's master, Donne, has half a dozen to every page. Quarles has as many. Crashaw systematizes them. He writes a poem to the weeping Magdalen, in each of whose thirty-three stanzas her tears are contemplated from some fresh angle. John Cleveland, of whose poems five editions were published in 1647, thus laments Edward King, Milton's Lycidas:

"In thee Neptune hath got an University.
We'll dive no more for pearls; the hope to see
Thy sacred reliques of mortality
Shall welcome storms and make the seaman prize
His shipwreck now more than his merchandize."

In his poem of EASTER Herbert himself writes:

*Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part
With all thy art :
The crosse taught all wood to resound his name
Who bore the same ;
His stretched sinews taught all strings what key
Is best to celebrate this most high day.*

Another Herbertian example, and one quite in the spirit of Crashaw, is from MARIE MAGDALENE:

*When blessed Marie wip'd her Saviour's feet,
(Whose precepts she had trampled on before,)
And wore them for a jewell on her head,
Shewing his steps should be the street
Wherein she thenceforth evermore
With pensive humblenesse would live and tread.*

And one more I take from THE SACRIFICE:

*Behold, they spit on me in scornfull wise
Who by my spittle gave the blinde man eies,
Leaving his blindnesse to mine enemies.*

These are pretty bad. The thought is certainly forced. But it would be a mistake to suppose such cases common. In general, Herbert's artistic sense saves him. He is too much interested in welding together form and matter to allow such vagaries. And on reflection these may seem examples not so much of conceits as of bad taste,—a frequent fault with Herbert, and one due in part to what I have called the privacy of his composition. Abstracting attention from this, we may detect even in these extravagant lines brooding feeling. The emotional sequence is not untrue. In the worst sort of conceits it is. When Laërtes first hears of Ophelia's drowning, Shakespeare makes him say:

“Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears.”

Of course we know that no such words ever came from the lips of a loving brother. Herbert is incapable of such perversity. He never quite departs from truth of feeling. In the instances cited, it is not impossible to feel that all subsequent wood sympathizes with the wood of the cross; or to imagine that the hostile spittle of his foes recalls to Jesus his pity for the blind. Even the notorious couplet of *THE DAWNING*,

*Christ left his grave-clothes that we might, when grief
Draws tears or bloud, not want an handkerchief,*

is not untrue or really capricious. Christ's grave-clothes are not mentioned as picturesque pieces of accidental linen. They have in Herbert's mind an essentially healing connection with our griefs.

Seldom, however, does Herbert venture into these perilous regions, familiar as they are to most of his contemporaries. What are called his conceits are usually cases of condensed imagination. They need no apology. On the contrary, they show a restraint and coherence of mood which were exceptional three hundred years ago. The following stanza from *EMPLOYMENT* well illustrates their method, their difficulties, and the grounds for admiration which careful reading discloses:

*Man is no starre, but a quick coal
Of mortall fire ;*

*Who blows it not, nor doth controll
A faint desire,
Lest his own ashes choke his soul.*

Here we have the frequent trouble of words whose ancient sense has changed, *quick* formerly meaning *living*, and *faint*, *fainting*. But when it is clear what the words mean, how fresh and subtle is the figure! The powers of man are not fixed and permanent like those of the star; but, tending of themselves to decay, perpetually need rekindling. Or take the last stanza of SION:

*And truly brasse and stones are heavie things,
Tombes for the dead, not temples fit for thee.
But grones are quick and full of wings,
And all their motions upward be,
And ever as they mount, like larks they sing.
The note is sad, yet musick for a king.*

How permeated by a single feeling are all these well-considered phrases! Or take from LONGING an example which shall indicate Herbert's compactness as well:

*From thee all pitie flows.
Mothers are kinde because thou art,
And dost dispose
To them a part.
Their infants them; and they suck thee
More free.*

I do not deny that everywhere in Herbert there is

intellectual effort, and that he demands a corresponding effort on his reader's part. That was the enjoyment of his age, and might well be more largely our own. *As flames do work and winde when they ascend, so does he weave himself into the sense.* But I believe that whoever scrutinizes carefully will agree that to an extent unusual in his time Herbert maintains the character of a poet and refuses that of a "wit." His weaving is not executed for elegance or display, but is a subtle tracing of religious passion in words which, though compact with thought and sometimes too forceful, are plain, veracious, and of highly individual quality.

Nor is Herbert's sobriety notable merely in the matter of conceits. It extends to other literary extravagances then in vogue. There is no acrostic among his poems, and but a single emblem poem, — one of exceeding beauty. He has but one anagram. At a time when poets prided themselves on puns, he uses few, and none of them jocosely. Verbal relationships arouse his curiosity, but never stir his mirth. The following is, I believe, a complete list: *dispark* and *sparkling* in THE FORE-RUNNERS; *do thee right* (write) in PROVIDENCE; *heaven* and *haven* in THE SIZE; *holy* and *wholly* in HEAVEN; *I ease you* in JESU; *raise* and *race* in THE TEMPER and THE SACRIFICE; *rest* and *restlessness* in THE PULLEY; *strokes* and *stroking* in THE THANKSGIVING; *sonne* and *sunne* several

times repeated and once discussed at length. Until within the last two hundred years, few writers of our language have abused it so little.

There is a similar abstinence in classical allusions. According to the taste of that day a poet was expected continually to refer to the gods and history of ancient Greece and Rome. Milton does so, as much when he deals with sacred subjects as with secular. Herbert's Latin poems, his Latin letters and orations, abound in such allusions. In the whole *TEMPLE* I find only these few instances: in *ARTILLERIE* the music of the spheres is mentioned; in *DISCIPLINE* Love's bow; in *DIVINITIE* the Gordian knot; in *HOME* the apple may be thought of as the lover's fruit; in *THE INVITATION* the dove appears as the bird of love; in *THE PEARL* there is mention of a labyrinth and a clue; in *THANKSGIVING* Ovid's *Art of Love* may be referred to; in *THE SONNE* possibly Plato's torch-race is hinted; and in *TIME* possibly Homer's picture of the Guide-god Hermes. Several of these are decidedly questionable; but even if all are admitted, how astonishing small is the list! What sobriety and harmonious taste appears in the almost complete refusal on Herbert's part to conform to an incongruous literary fashion which his education peculiarly fitted him gracefully to accept!

On the whole, then, we may say that Herbert chooses wise means for reaching his special ends. He is the first of our lyric poets who can fairly

be called a conscious artist : the first who systematically tries to shape each of his short poems by a predetermined plan, and that, too, a plan involved in the nature of his subject. He is the first who tries to cut off the extravagances of an over-luxuriant age. That he did not fully succeed is evident. He was a pioneer. He was working in private, on themes expressive of conflict, while knowing very fully and sharing to a large degree the ideals of his contemporaries. But he was in possession of a new method, and one of enormous importance. That he was able to apply it so widely is one of his two great achievements.

*Latin poems from the Williams Manuscript in Herbert's own hand.
See Vol. I, p. 179, and compare with the handwriting of Vol. V,
p. 6 and 64.*

In sputum & Conuicia

O barbaros! sic os expenditis sanctum
 Visum quod vni probet^r omnibus vitare
 sputando, pedicando? sic Aquas vitæ
 Contaminatis, alveosq; calathæ
 Sputando, blasphemando? nempe ne hoc fiat
 In posterum, maledicta Ficus, arceus
 Gens tota fiet, atq; utrinq; phylæus.
 Parate situlas Ethnici, lagenasq;
 Graves lagenas. Vester est Aqua-dulcis.

In Coronam spinarum

Christi, dolor tibi supplicio, mihi blanda voluptas
 Tu spinâ miserè pungens, ipse Rosâ.
 Spicula mutemus: capias Tu sorta Rosarum
 Qui Caput es, spinas & tua Membra tuas.

THE TEXT AND ORDER OF POEMS

THE TEXT AND ORDER OF POEMS

NONE of the English poems of Herbert were printed during his life. All have been transmitted to us through an intermediary. Who this intermediary was, what were his character and competence, and what the circumstances attending his peculiar charge, must first be made clear before the grave textual problems of Herbert's little volume can be understood.

I

ABOUT a month before Herbert's death, his friend, Nicholas Ferrar, sent a messenger to Bemerton to obtain an account of his condition. Herbert was already weak and lying on a couch. At the messenger's departure, says Walton, "Mr. Herbert with a thoughtful and contented look said to him, *Sir, I pray deliver this little Book to my dear brother Ferrar, and tell him he shall find in it a picture of the many spiritual Conflicts that have past betwixt God and my Soul, before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus, my Master. Desire him to read it; and then, if he can think it may turn to the advantage of any dejected poor Soul, let it be made publick. If not, let him burn it; for*

I and it are less than the least of God's mercies. Thus meanly did this humble man think of this excellent Book, which now bears the name of **THE TEMPLE: OR SACRED POEMS AND PRIVATE EJACULATIONS**, of which Mr. Ferrar would say that it would enrich the World with pleasure and piety. And it appears to have done so; for there have been more than twenty thousand of them sold since the first Impression;" i. e. in less than forty years.

Nicholas Ferrar, to whom Herbert thus entrusted the fortunes of his verse, was born in the same year as Herbert and Walton, and was the son of a wealthy London merchant. He took his Bachelor's degree at Cambridge two years before Herbert, travelled on the Continent, acquired much skill in language and literature, succeeded his father as Deputy Manager of the Virginia Company, was for a year a member of Parliament, preferred celibacy to a brilliant marriage, and in 1625 withdrew from the world, establishing himself, his aged mother, his brother, his sister and her eighteen children, on a large estate which he purchased at Little Gidding, in Huntingdonshire. On account of its extreme conventual regimen, this place soon acquired the name of The Protestant Nunnery. Each member of the household had a fixed assignment of work and worship. Religion, study, music, and handicraft filled every hour of the day, and a considerable portion of the night. Apart from prayer, book-binding was the

favorite occupation. Several "Concordances," or Harmonies of the Gospels and of Jewish history, made at Gidding and bound in sumptuous style, have survived to our time.

The temper of Ferrar — at once a religious devotee and a strong man of affairs, who sought in an original fashion to establish a little Heaven upon earth where he and his might dwell in peace, order, and beauty — was singularly congenial to Herbert. He himself, it is true, had little of Ferrar's ascetic disposition. He did not practise fasts and vigils. But he admired Ferrar's devotion to God and his own soul, he felt the sanity of mind which Ferrar preserved through all his pious exercises, and he understood the business ability which made that daring experimental life successful. Like Herbert, too, Ferrar had become a deacon, but still withheld himself from priest's orders. During the last seven years of Herbert's life, Ferrar and he were close friends, — friends indeed more of heart and mind than of outward intercourse. Oley says that the two "saw not each other in many years, I think scarce ever, but as Members of one Universitie." Walton writes that "this holy friendship was long maintain'd without any interview, but only by loving and endearing Letters." That the friendship was quite so impalpable as these statements assert is unlikely. Herbert and Ferrar had been fellow students at the University, where Herbert remained when

Ferrar settled at Gidding, less than twenty miles away. The year following that settlement, Herbert became Lay Prebendary of Leighton, about five miles from Ferrar's door, and for the rebuilding of its church raised among his friends a fund of £2000. To this fund Ferrar was a contributor. Herbert repeatedly begged Ferrar to relieve him of the prebend; but, true to his plan of retirement, he refused, though he promised to oversee the work of reconstruction. Herbert may never have visited the church for which he labored seven years and which he also remembered in his will. No visit is recorded. But such persistent absenteeism is difficult to believe, especially during the years before the Bemerton priesthood. Probably during the Leighton period meetings did occur and the real intimacy of the two men became established, letters and the exchange of literary products keeping the friendship warm during the isolation of Bemerton. Four months before his death Herbert annotated Ferrar's translation of Valdesso's *Divine Considerations*, and in his last illness prayers for him were said at Gidding. When the poems, long circulated in manuscript, finally sought the press, no sponsor of more sympathetic temper, or of finer or firmer judgment, could be found than Nicholas Ferrar.

Ferrar acted promptly, applying at once for a license. But a curious delay occurred. The official censor, the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, was

unwilling to sanction these lines of THE CHURCH MILITANT:

*Religion stands on tip-toe in our land
Ready to pass to the American strand.*

Ferrar, however, refused to alter anything that Herbert had written, and finally obtained the required license. The book was issued soon after Herbert's death in 1633, a few copies being printed without date, and was so successful that a second edition appeared in the same year. To the sixth edition, that of 1641, Harvey's Synagogue was unhappily added. Corruptions of the perplexing text crept in early and continued long. It was not until 1874 that critical revision of the text can be said to have begun.

II

FOR fixing a text, three original sources are available. First and most authoritative is Ferrar's edition. I shall refer to this as the edition of 1633. Wherever this gives sense, even inferior sense, I follow it. Ferrar had Herbert's latest manuscript, he had literary perception, and that he had a literary conscience is shown by his stern treatment of the censor's objections. The book is a piece of careful printing. Departure from its text requires large justification.

But there is a second authoritative source, so

tending to corroborate the first as to be almost one with it. In the Bodleian Library at Oxford is a manuscript (Tanner Manuscript, 307) which was apparently at one time in the possession of Archbishop Sancroft (1617-1693). On the title-page is written in his hand, "The Original of Mr. George Herbert's Temple, as it was at first licenced for the presse. W. Sancroft." The title-page bears also the signature of B. Lany, the Vice-Chancellor, and of four other persons, presumably the judges to whom the book was submitted. That it is the "little Book" brought by Ferrar's messenger has been thought improbable both on account of its folio size and because it is too clean to have passed through the printer's hands. But I cannot count these objections formidable. Just how clean printers' hands at that time were, we do not know; and a pretty adjective used by so picturesque a writer as Walton is not a matter to pin one's faith to. The word "little" may well have been used to indicate the small number of poems which the book contained, only one hundred and sixty-nine. It may have been equivalent to "brief," and have had no reference to the size of the volume's sheets. The five signatures make it almost certain that this is the copy submitted for license; and if so, it is probably the copy used for printing. For it is unlikely that a censor so careful as Vice-Chancellor Lany showed himself to be would allow a book to be printed which might differ from the one he had

licensed. The character of the manuscript, too, favors the supposition that this copy was prepared for the printer. It is not in Herbert's handwriting, but has been drawn up by a good copyist, who uses throughout an ink generally black and clear. In yellowish ink many small changes have been made, chiefly of punctuation, spelling, capitals, and the numbering of the stanzas in *THE CHURCH-PORCH*. This last revision looks as if it were made for the printer, and by some one else than the original writer. But whether this is the very manuscript sent by Herbert to Ferrar or not, the differences between it and Ferrar's edition are so few that its influence in determining a true text is chiefly collateral and confirmatory. In the notes I refer to it as B, or the Bodleian Manuscript, and give all its variations of reading.

Until recently these two, the edition of 1633 and the Bodleian Manuscript, have been our sole means of knowing what Herbert wrote. That untiring, if often whimsical, explorer of the poetry of Elizabeth and James, Dr. Grosart, has added a third. In 1874, when preparing an edition of Herbert for the Fuller Worthies' Library, he drew from its hiding-place in the Williams Library, Gordon Square, London, a manuscript which up to that time had remained unused (Jones Manuscript, B, 62). Little is known about it now. The fly-leaf bears the inscription "Doñ: Jni. Jones Cler. e museo V. Cl. D. H. M. Verrantodum, qui ob. 1730," which has

been translated, "A gift to John Jones, Clerk, from the library of the celebrated Dr. H. Mapletoft, Huntingdon, who died 1730." On the next leaf, in the same hand, presumably that of Mr. Jones, is written, "This book came originally from the family of Little Gidding and was probably bound there. Q. Whether this be not the Ms. copy that was sent by Mr. Herbert a little before his death to Mr. Nic. Ferrar? See Mr. Herbert's Life." Who, then, is John Jones, and who is H. M.?

Rev. John Jones (1700-1770) was an Oxford graduate, who was for a time Vicar of Alconbury, near Huntingdon, and died as Vicar of Sheephall, Herts. At his death his papers came into the possession of Dr. Thomas Dawson, a dissenting minister, and they are now in the Williams Library. The only reason I can discover for supposing that H. M. stands for Henry Mapletoft is that the name occurs again in manuscript 87 of the Jones papers. Another Mapletoft, Dr. John (1631-1721), was a son of Susanna Collet, Nicholas Ferrar's niece. He was Ferrar's godson, brought up at Little Gidding, became an eminent Professor of Physic at Gresham College, and later a clergyman of wide influence. Neither of his two sons was named Henry, nor have I been able to learn how the H. M. of the manuscript was related to him. But whether its former owner was or was not a kinsman of Ferrar, at least so much is clear: John Jones derived the manuscript from some library

in Huntingdonshire to which he supposed it came from the neighboring Little Gidding. Probably, therefore, it was at one time in the possession of Nicholas Ferrar.

This cannot, however, be the manuscript obtained by Ferrar from Herbert just before the latter's death. While its size, duodecimo, accords well with Walton's description, it contains but seventy-three of the one hundred and sixty-nine poems of the Bodleian. It has also many poems which are found neither in the Bodleian Manuscript nor in the edition of 1633, viz., six English poems, and two series of Latin poems, entitled *PASSIO DISCERPTA* and *LUCUS*. Preceding the Latin poems is the pencil note, "The following supposed to be Mr. Herbert's own writing. See the Records in the custody of the University Orator at Cambridge." That the writing is Herbert's is unquestionable. The English poems are written by a different hand, though the hand which has corrected them is the same as that of the Latin poems.

The departures of this manuscript from the received text are great and numerous. Few poems are without them. In *THE CHURCH-PORCH* ninety-four of the four hundred and sixty-two lines vary from the received text. This mass of fresh material Dr. Grosart treats as no less worthy of respect than the traditional readings, and he has formed the text of his two editions from this manuscript or from the edition of 1633, according as his poetic

taste approves the one or the other. I do not venture so far. In my notes I have recorded all the Williams and Bodleian readings, indicating the former by the letter W, the latter by the letter B; but I have held to Ferrar's text, retaining even its spelling and capitals, and changing only its punctuation.

I agree, however, with those who count the Williams Manuscript of capital consequence in Herbert scholarship, and dissent from them merely in my judgment of where that consequence lies. They find it in the poetic worth of the readings, I in their indications of date. Neither they nor I have any doubt of its genuineness, or that it represents a state of the poems earlier than the Bodleian. It was a common practice with the poets of those days to circulate their verses in manuscript, and one which had many advantages. It allowed continual alteration till death fell on the unsatisfied poet and stopped further improvement. Few of Donne's poems were published during his life; none of Sidney's Sonnets to Stella. Shakespeare's Sonnets were long circulated in manuscript before being surreptitiously printed. Undoubtedly it is to this custom of private circulation that the Williams volume owes its existence. It is a manuscript lent early in its writer's life to a friend, probably to Mr. Ferrar, containing most of Herbert's verse which was written at the time of its lending. But its poems were still undergoing con-

struction, and the process did not cease with the departure of this particular copy from its author's hands. Its lines were subsequently filed. Stanzas appear in it which in the Bodleian Manuscript were thought superfluous. Conceits and dubious constructions are permitted here more frequently than afterward. Let any one read the beautiful EVEN-SONG of the Bodleian, and then the awkward verses in the Williams Manuscript which it supplanted; let him read the double version of the opening of THE CHURCH-PORCH, of the ELIXER, or of SUNDAY; the closing verses of JORDAN, of CHARMS AND KNOTS, or of WHITSUNDAY; and he will be convinced that it is the Bodleian and not the Williams Manuscript which represents the maturer taste of its writer. That is certainly the impression given by these longer variations. But the general inferiority of the Williams readings becomes increasingly evident when we test them in a connected group of brief examples. Such a group I draw from THE CHURCH-PORCH. In each case I give the Williams reading first and then the Bodleian:

2. *The price of thee, and mark thee for a treasure.*
Thy rate and price, and mark thee for a treasure.
57. *Lust and wine plead a pleasure, cheating, gaine.*
Lust and wine plead a pleasure, avarice, gain.
91. *O England! full of all sinn, most of sloth.*
O England! full of sinne, but most of sloth.

200. *Learn this, it hath old gamesters dearly cost.
Learn this, that hath old gamesters deerely cost.*
265. *When base men are exalted, do not bate.
When basenesse is exalted, do not bate.*
317. *Truth dwels not in the clouds ; that bow doth hitt
No more than passion when she talks of it.
Truth dwels not in the clouds ; the bow that's there
Doth oftē aim at, never hit the sphere.*
326. *Need and bee glad and wish thy presence still.
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.*
347. *Who say, I care not, those I give for gone ;
They dye in holes where glory never shone.
Who say, I care not, those I give for lost ;
And to instruct them, 't will not quit the cost.*

Nobody can fail to see that between the first and second of each of these pairs, time and a smoothing artist have intervened. The very delicacy of some of the changes, and of many more which limited space forbids me to quote, shows that the critic has been at work, contriving means to ease the reader's attention, while at the same time filling the line with ampler and more precise significance.

I, accordingly, altogether reject the readings of the Williams Manuscript, and conform my text entirely to that of the edition of 1633. The Williams Manuscript, I believe, represents a state of Herbert's poetry which had been outgrown. To adopt its text is to set up our judgment against that

of its author. But though discarding its readings, I still count it of capital importance in Herbert criticism. Poetically superseded, it is nothing less than epoch-making chronologically; for if we can prove that the Williams Manuscript was written before the Bodleian, we may find in it a means of sorting the poetry of Herbert and of distinguishing an earlier and a later portion. Let me, then, establish this all-important fact through three converging lines of evidence.

III

AN obvious indication of early date is found in the fewness of the Williams poems and the position these few occupy in the edition of 1633. If all Herbert's poems were in existence when the Williams Manuscript was written, it is strange such a selection was made, copied, and elaborately corrected. The selection was certainly not made on grounds of the excellence of the poems included, nor because of any unity in their topic. They have no more inner connection than the same number taken accidentally from any other part of the book. And while there are a dozen of them which rank high among Herbert's poems, the majority are of an average sort, poems more marked by Herbert's peculiarities than by the traits which commend him to all time. If we may assume that the manuscript includes the bulk of what had then been

written, all is clear. In that case also we could understand why these poems, being early, stand early in the arrangement of the Bodleian. In that manuscript, and in the edition of 1633, no Williams poem appears between the seventy-ninth and the one hundred and fifty-sixth place. Though among the seven which in the traditional order are usually printed after the one hundred and fifty-sixth, six are from the Williams Manuscript, the position of these final poems is evidently due to their general subject, — Death and the Last Judgment. It is true that out of the first seventy-nine, eighteen are not Williams poems. But many of these, e. g. *THE AGONIE*, *SEPULCHRE*, *ANTIPHON*, *THE WINDOWS*, probably owe their places to their congruity with neighboring poems. It should be remembered, too, that in asserting, as I believe we must, that all the poems of the Williams Manuscript are early, we do not necessarily say that every one found elsewhere is late. Single poems may have existed at the time this manuscript was lent which did not happen to be copied into it.

But the early date of the Williams Manuscript is still more plainly shown by the character of its readings. To these I have already called attention. Their very inferiority is what gives the manuscript worth, for it justifies us in using it as a document for dating. Strangely enough, this has not been generally perceived. The readings have been treated as weighty, though the manuscript is

counted early. But the two things are incompatible, unless indeed Herbert was a bad critic. There is no evidence that he was. Accordingly, when of two manuscripts one shows on almost every page duller or more wayward readings, we may fairly conclude that it belongs to its writer's earlier years. That the Williams readings are prevailingly duller, I have already proved in the case of *THE CHURCH-PORCH*. Let any one examine the shorter poems as they stand in the printed text and as they appear in the Williams version, given in my appendix, and they will lead him to the same conclusion. We have before us in the one case a finished result, in the other, a preliminary draft.

A third sort of evidence, even more important for fixing the early date of the Williams Manuscript, is found in a hitherto unobserved fact of its subject-matter. In 1630 Herbert became a priest. Now no Williams poem contains any hint that its author is a priest. Many distinctly state that he is not. A large part of the non-Williams poems deal with the joys and perplexities of the priesthood. It is impossible, then, that the Williams Manuscript can have been written at Bemerton. And this peculiarity of its contents, coinciding, as it does, with the character of its readings and the position which the much-corrected Williams poems occupy in the Bodleian Manuscript, assures us that Herbert wrote poetry long before he went to Bemerton. It has sometimes been carelessly

asserted that the seclusion of his last three years made him a poet. But Bacon knew him to be a notable religious poet eight years before his death. The Williams Manuscript proves that when Herbert went into retirement, he took with him nearly half his poetic work. At this time, he had both written and elaborately altered a large body of verse which he was still farther to perfect in the Bemerton parsonage. *I often*, he says in JORDAN, *blotted what I had begunne*. Herbert must hereafter stand forth not as a sudden rhapsodist, but as an intentional, long-continued, and ever-revising workman.

How much earlier than 1630, the year when Herbert took priest's orders, the Williams Manuscript was written, is uncertain. In the great AFFLICTION, *When first thou didst entice to thee my heart*, the laments on the death of friends, and on Herbert's severe illness and mental perplexity, indicate that this poem was written in the Crisis years between 1627 and 1629. With this period Walton also connects it. Several other Williams poems contain hints that they were born in the same time of disappointment and struggle. But most of those which refer to this period (and it was one likely to leave its mark on whatever was produced in it) are found among the non-Williams poems; for example, THE PRIESTHOOD, in which he is still hesitating about taking orders. A decision, however, appears to be reached in THE

PEARL and OBEDIENCE, both included in the early manuscript. Most probably, then, the Williams Manuscript was drawn up about 1629, but not all the poems written during this and the preceding year were copied into it. Since the history of the manuscript connects it with Little Gidding, my own conjecture is that these poems were lent to Ferrar after he and Herbert became intimate through the building of Leighton Church. This would also justify Ferrar's prompt publication of the final work. Many of the poems he already knew, and he had no need of taking time to determine their worth.

IV

ASSUMING, then, that through the Williams Manuscript we know that as early as 1628-29 nearly half of Herbert's work was in existence, we are able to rearrange the poems and give them an order more advantageous for study and enjoyment. In justification of the traditional order no grounds are known. Ferrar found it in the Bodleian Manuscript, and followed it in his own printing. The Williams Manuscript does not preserve it. The poems do not require it. Probably it was originally accidental. Occasionally, little groups of poems may give indication of a natural tie, the later members of a group being possibly drawn after the earlier by some inner similarity, some dependence

of subject, or some expansion of a phrase once used. But such connection is rare and uncertain. After the first start, the poems were apparently jotted down without plan. In the traditional order there is, therefore, nothing sacred, probably nothing expressive of Herbert's mind or wish, nothing to forbid whatever new arrangement is more luminous. The most instructive order for all poetry, it is agreed, is the chronological. Though the evidence in Herbert's case, whether drawn from the Williams Manuscript or from the style and statements of the poems themselves, is too slender to establish a thoroughgoing chronological sequence, I believe it is ample for distinguishing three great Divisions of poems corresponding to the three periods of Herbert's life marked out in my first Essay. We shall accordingly have poems of the Cambridge period, extending from the beginning of his writing through his Oratorship to 1627; of the Crisis period, from that date through the years of stress and strain to the time of his taking orders in 1630; and poems of the Bemerton period, when as a priest he served his little parish from 1630 until his death. In the first of these three Divisions will be included the great majority of the Williams poems; in the second, such Williams and non-Williams poems as contain a reference to Herbert's uncertainty about his coming career; in the third, the majority of the non-Williams poems. Knowing that much which was written at an early

date might first appear in a late manuscript, I have sometimes been tempted on grounds of style to refer a non-Williams poem to the Cambridge Division. On the whole, I have considered that placing it there is too hazardous an exercise of conjecture, and I have finally allowed no poem to enter this Division which is not contained in the Williams Manuscript. Thinking it well, too, to give the reader some defence against my meddling hand, I print an index of titles arranged according to the traditional scheme.

So much chronological sorting into three broad Divisions, the use of the Williams Manuscript seems to me to render possible. Within the limits of the Bemerton Division, and to a less extent elsewhere, further time-indications may be found. But these are too few and of too uncertain a nature to permit a conservative critic to venture on a full chronological arrangement. Within the great Divisions I have preferred a topical order, which may still throw light on the processes of Herbert's mind, and illuminate the poems by what is known of their writer through other sources. All the poems of the Crisis period are naturally placed together. Within each of the other two Divisions I have drawn up five subordinate sections or Groups, and furnished them with suitable explanatory Prefaces. In the first Division, covering the Cambridge years, the sententious morality of THE CHURCH-PORCH naturally stands first, for Herbert apparently de-

7-14-80
at Boston
6 vcs
20E

12/17

